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Nicholas Poussin

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MEMOIRS

OF

THE LIFE

OF

NICHOLAS POUSSIN.

BY

MARIA GRAHAM,

AUTHOR OF A JOURNAL OF A TOUR IN INDIA,
&c. &c.

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PREFACE.

A PREFACE is usually written to account for the motives for publishing the work it stands before; and an author seldom ventures to assign his or her pleasure, as the chief motive for writing. This, however, was the original reason for attempting an English life of Nicholas Poussin. Others have since occurred, and as they may perhaps induce the reader to sympathise with the writer, they shall be stated.

Modern artists are apt to complain of want of public patronage, and to lament that no fair occasion of distinguishing

themselves can now occur, because it is no longer the fashion to decorate churches or palaces, within and without, with historical pictures. Now, Nicholas Poussin did actually distinguish himself, and has won a great name among painters, without such occasion; for the two or three pictures which he painted for altars in great churches, are not only below many other painters, but decidedly below himself. His friends, or patrons, or employers, were gentlemen who loved the arts, and loved to have their chambers adorned with pictures of historical or poetical subjects, of a convenient size and price for private persons: and Poussin discovered that grandeur of thought and design, expression, and correctness, were independent on the size of the canvass on which he was to work. He acquired a reputation, in consequence of which, the Court of France thought proper to patronise

him: but it will be seen in the Life, how little that patronage contributed either to his fame or interest.

He was really a Painter: cultivating philosophy and literature, because they were necessary for his improvement in art. Modest and simple in his manners, mild, pious, and affectionate; he was beloved, respected, and admired; his industry was unremitting, and even his relaxations and pleasures were made conducive to the great end of his life — excellence as a painter.

It is much, but not enough for a painter to know the various forms of nature, to understand the management of colours, and to handle the pencil with dexterity. He must look into the minds of men, that he may understand their feelings and passions. He must be acquainted

with history and poetry, that he may choose subjects worthy of his pencil; with the customs and manners of nations, ancient and modern, that he may give his figures the dress and actions they require. The study of antiquity, anatomy, perspective with geometry, and architecture, are indispensable. And some knowledge of physical geography is necessary, that the vegetation and scenery may be true.

These things are not easily learned: nor can the mind be debased or indolent, that, seeing the task before it, can resolutely undertake, and steadily persevere in it. Yet some persons, who are, it is to be hoped, better patriots than judges of painting, and more acquainted with the petty squabbles of contemporary artists, than with the history of art, have ventured lately to insinuate, that painting flourishes best in

slavish countries, and in slavish * times. But they forget that poetry and painting have a common origin, and that they both sprung up in the free cities of ancient Greece. They forget too, that the period when the great poets of Italy wrote, and when her greatest painters were born, was one of freedom, bordering on licentiousness. Look into the annals of Italy. Michael Angelo, Raffaelle, Titian, Leonardo, Giulio, and Georgione, were all born in the space between 1442, and 1492, while Florence was a republic, and when the Captains of Italy fought in the pay of free cities. From the moment those Captains became stationary tyrants, no great man in art was born or nurtured in the North of Italy.

* It is a pity that such things should be said, even in the annals of art; but I grieve to think that the Edinburgh Review should have inadvertently admitted the slander. See the article on Farrington's Life of Reynolds.

The cities in the Papal States long retained, together with the republican form of government, something of the republican spirit; that spirit which sleeps, but is not even yet dead in the ashes of old Rome. The second school of painters was, therefore, as might have been looked for, at Bologna, the freest of those cities. The Caracci and their scholars dared to paint nobly, for they were free.

If at that season, Poussin, Le Brun, and Le Sueur, and Bourdon, arose in France, is it too much to say, that it was because France was then more free than at any other period? The religious wars had elicited a freedom of feeling and discussion, favourable to fostering every liberal art. The iron age of Louis XIV., had not arisen to crush the farther rise of the very talent with which it decked itself. The great poets, and orators, and painters of France,

had arisen in circumstances favourable to their genius; they were freely nurtured; but the spirits which had shown themselves in the poetry of Corneille, Racine, and Boileau; in the orations of Bossuet, Massillon, and a host of others, were cramped and trodden back by the tyranny of that court, which revoked the edict of Nantes, and drove forth to exile the worthiest of the inhabitants of France. The spirits were, as I say, repressed; the more delicate died and withered away; and as painting was one of these, I have no concern with the other consequences of that eventful period.

If, then, painting has hitherto loved to live in the light of liberty, Englishmen surely need not be afraid to cultivate it; and if hereafter great painters shall arise among us, it will be be-

cause we are still free, not because the "national character is broken down."

The English school of painting, though far inferior to either the first or second splendid periods of Italian art, is now the best in Europe. It has fewer faults. For the truth of this the Academy may appeal with confidence to the thousands of Englishmen who have lately visited the Continent, and looked impartially at the foreign exhibitions. The German artists have the best feeling abroad: they imitate the old masters, but have mistaken reverse of wrong for right; and, avoiding the extravagant action, glaring colour, and false feeling of the French, they have adopted babyish simplicity. The Italians are nothing in painting. The example of Canova has drawn all the rising talent of his countrymen towards sculpture, and there is not a painter in Italy, who, in

the various provinces of art, can compare with any one of our academicians; not to speak of the splendid talents we possess, unconnected with the Academy.

It is a grievous circumstance that a prejudice in favour of every thing foreign exists among the English; a prejudice so old as to have been jested with centuries ago, by all manner of persons, from Trinculo, who exclaims, that in England any thing *strange* "will make a man;" to the facetious Dr. Bourd, who "*painted, for an Englishman, a proper fellow naked, with a pair of tailors' shears in one hand, and a piece of cloth on the other, with these*" and other "*rhymes*," —

All new fashions be pleasant to we,
*I will have them whether I thrive or thee.**

The prejudice continues; and unluckily

* Camden.

a painter, sculptor, engraver, or any other artist, down to a milliner or a cook*, is considered good or bad as his birth took place on one side or the other of the channel; and one's very heart is grieved, to see the excellent English works that are held cheap, while portfolios are filled, and walls are covered with French and German trash that, when the fashion and the novelty are gone, will inevitably be sent to the garret and the cheesemonger's.

But good sense will prevail at last, and good taste will come with it. Our patrons will discover that our artists are better painters, better scholars, and more respectable men than most of those who assume the name of Painter elsewhere. And our artists will content themselves with the degree of patronage that the

* Cookery has been called a *fine art*; and as to a milliner, she or he is an *artist* in *finery*. — See Forsyth on Italy.

times and circumstances of our country allow, when they remember that the excessive patronage bestowed by some of the foreign protectors of painting, and other fine arts, utterly deprived the artist of every shadow of independence. No Englishman could submit to the absolute controul of any individual patron ; and the consciousness that he and his work are absolutely free, and only subject to general opinion, not private and arbitrary authority, ought to be taken as a privilege, for which a large allowance in their expectation of encouragement should be made.

The hope of rendering some service to art has not been without its effect, in encouraging the writer of this volume to proceed in the task, pleasant enough in itself, of endeavouring to introduce into the general mass of literature, something not exclusively technical, upon Painting ;

and she trusts others, better qualified for the task, will second her.

The materials, of which the following pages are composed, have of course been mostly printed in various forms and languages before ; but they have not been put together, nor does any tolerable life of Poussin exist in English. A good translation of Lanzi's excellent little history would, perhaps, be the best addition that could be made to the English artist's library ; as the original is certainly the best book on the subject that has appeared for centuries in Italy. Meantime it is hoped, that this essay on Poussin may find favour before the public, which is the true patron and encourager both of literature and art.

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House of Poussin on the Trinita de Monti
seen from the Portico of Claudes House

THE LIFE

OF

NICHOLAS POUSSIN.

The biography of illustrious men has always been looked upon as not only the most entertaining but the most instructive kind of reading; and we put the Lives of Plutarch into the hands of our young soldiers, and scholars, and statesmen, to form their minds and to awaken their emulation. It is unfortunate, however, that we have not one complete life of any of the eminent artists that adorned the best ages, and the politest cities of Greece, though the numerous anecdotes related

concerning them, and the respectful mention made of them by the greatest writers, show that the Greeks considered the cultivation of the fine arts as a means of improving public virtue, not less than of the refinement of public taste.

In the southern climates, where luxuriant nature gives much for little labour, and where, consequently, the people have a great deal of time for recreation, the painter and the sculptor, the musician and the poet, who, withdrawing the attention of their fellow-citizens from the mere pleasures of sense, and alluring them to the contemplation of excellence, refine their taste, and render them more alive to the charms of moral and intellectual perfection, must at all times have been considered among the benefactors of their country.

In the north, on the other hand, where nature is more sparing of her gifts, and man has a harder task to perform in order

to obtain her blessings, it is long before the state of society either requires or admits of the cultivation of the fine arts. Hence, among the nations which first began to shake off the ignorance of the dark ages, these softer pursuits were neglected, and every prejudice ran strongly against all dignity but that acquired by arms or scholastic learning. The knight and the priest equally looked down with contempt upon the artist; and it required the revival of Italy to give him once more that place in the scale of society which the ancients had always assigned to him.

To the modern artist, the life of the sculptor whose chisel immortalized the conqueror of a foreign enemy, or of the painter who was employed to represent the deliverer of his country at the head of his victorious army, as the greatest honour that country could decree to him, would have been invaluable in a two-fold sense: first, to his advancement as an artist, by

showing by what exertions, by what methods the Greeks attained to that excellence which we can only admire, without reaching, in their sculpture, and which their best pictures doubtless also possessed; and, secondly, such a biography might help to do away the remains of the prejudices of the times of chivalry, which, together with that delicacy of taste in the artist himself, which renders him impatient of the bustle and the cares of vulgar life, keeps him too much separated from the rest of the world.

But perhaps even the examples of Phidias and Praxiteles, of Apelles and of Zeuxis, would not individually have been more useful than that of Nicholas Poussin, whose gentle manners and innocent life are finely set off by the noble perseverance which, in the pursuit of excellence, he opposed to every obstacle of fortune, till he at length attained to a rank among the greatest masters that few have reached,

and in his own walk of art none has surpassed.* To the young artist, the life of Poussin is a beacon to guide him through every difficulty: an encouragement beyond that which any patronage can afford; for it proves that, in despite of outward circumstances, genius aided by industry will be its own protector, and that fame, though she may come late, will never ultimately refuse her favours to real merit.

The family of Poussin was noble, but poor. His father, John Poussin, was a native of Soissons, and served with credit in the regiment of Tavanes during the reigns of Charles IX., Henry III., and Henry IV.; but the poverty of the royal coffers, during that unhappy period, had thrown all the expenses of a military life upon himself, and, like many of his brave fellow-soldiers, he was reduced to the

* Lanzi says, that, on coming to Rome, Poussin not only "improved his own manner, but discovered another and a different one, of which he is the legislator."

greatest indigence. After the taking of Vernon, in which town he then resided, he married Marie de Laisement, the widow of Le Moine, a solicitor of the same place; and having quitted the service, he retired to Andelys, in Normandy, sometime in the year 1592, and in June, 1594, his son Nicholas was born.

Few men have arisen to any great eminence in any art or science, of whom some early anecdote, indicative of their future excellence, is not related. Yet of early predilections how very few turn out of much value, the annals of every great school might show. A strong mind, or a lively imagination may receive an accidental impression, which for ever fixes the walk in which it is to excel; but how very few, compared to the many who discover early talent, are permitted by fortune or circumstances to pursue the path, which, in some, nature, in others, accidental association, seems to point out.

Yet, though we should in general agree with Johnson, that accident only influences a man's individual pursuits, and that his particular excellence depends merely on the general strength of his powers, we cannot help allowing something to that early bent of the mind which has often indicated future greatness in some particular walk. Pope, who

> Lisped in numbers, for the numbers came,

did not disappoint the promise of his infancy. The childish love of Reynolds for the miniatures in an old illuminated missal, produced in after-years not only a painter but a school; and Passeri tells us, that Nicholas Poussin was frequently chidden by his schoolmaster for making designs on the leaves of his books instead of studying.

This early love of art was doubtless fostered by the natural beauties of the neighbourhood of Andelys, which is situated among the pleasant hills on the

right bank of the Seine, where that river, in all its breadth, winds through the fair and fertile province of Normandy; and the neighbourhood of the town is graced, as it was once guarded, by more than one of those picturesque towers which the Normans have left in every part of their dominions, from the north of England to the south of Italy and Sicily. The sketches young Poussin made among these agreeable scenes, attracted the attention of Quintin Varin, a native of Amiens, who then resided at Andelys. The state of painting in France was at that time very low; all the faults with which the French school is so justly charged, were at their height; and if it began at that time to promise the better taste of Le Brun and Le Sueur, Varin may claim the honour of being among the first who led the way to improvement. His picture of "the presentation of Christ in the temple," painted for the barefooted Carmelites, and that of San Carlo Boromeo, painted for St. Etienne

du Mont, are considered as his best productions, and possessed great merit. It is therefore natural that his reputation should be great in a country town. And this circumstance, joined to the pressing entreaties of Nicholas, at length overcame the reluctance of John Poussin to permit his son to follow the bent of his inclination for painting; so that after repeated endeavours to dissuade him from a pursuit apparently so little promising, he permitted him to establish himself with Varin as his pupil.

To the almost paternal interest which his master took in his progress, and to the rational course of study he recommended, Poussin doubtless owed the success of his future life. But the study of Varin, and the little town of Andelys, afforded no models that could satisfy the genius of Poussin. He felt that there was greater excellence which might be attained and must be sought for, and, accordingly,

at the age of eighteen he went alone, friendless, and almost moneyless to Paris. There, his first master was Ferdinand Elle, a Fleming*, who enjoyed a considerable reputation as a portrait painter; but he soon left him, and became a pupil of L'Allemand, who, though superior to Ferdinand Elle, soon found himself far behind Poussin, in all but the mechanical part of his art, and their connexion did not last many weeks. In the school of L'Allemand, however, Poussin contracted a friendship with Philippe de Champagne, which was afterwards of singular advantage to him. †

Meantime his gentleness and his amiable manners had acquired many friends,

* Born at Malines.

† Philippe de Champagne, a native of Brussels, had no particular master till he came to Paris, where he was for a very short time with L'Allemand. He painted heads with truth and great attention to local colour. His skill in landscape painting he owed to Foucquieres.

among whom was a young nobleman of Poitou, then pursuing his studies at the university of Paris, who conceived so great a regard for him as not only to furnish him with money to assist his studies, but to introduce him to whoever he thought might be useful to him in their progress. The most important of his introductions was that to Courtois, the king's mathematician, who was then employed at the Louvre. Besides a large collection of excellent prints, especially those by Mark Antonio after Raffaelle, and Giulio Romano, Courtois possessed a number of original drawings by those masters, all of which he generously lent to Poussin, who eagerly and carefully copied them, and thus began to form his taste for that grand and chaste style which distinguishes his works. He often talked of this as the most fortunate occurrence of his life; for it opened to him a glimpse of that light he had so ardently longed for, and taught

him to conceive his subjects nobly and historically.

These advantages were, however, soon followed by a reverse peculiarly irksome to one of Poussin's character. The young nobleman, who had so liberally patronised him, was recalled by his mother to his country seat, and persuaded Poussin to accompany him, as he intended to embellish his house, and to give the direction of the improvements to his friend, whom he also meant to employ to paint several pictures for him. But the mother appears to have had little taste and no value for the fine arts; she put an end to all her son's projects of improvement, and instead of fostering the rising genius of her guest, she ridiculed his pursuits, overwhelmed him with a load of domestic accounts, and sought to convert him into a domestic drudge; till at length, wearied of her harshness and pride, he left her

castle, and set out on foot to return to Paris.

Without money and without acquaintance, the talents, which he had hitherto thought only of improving and enlarging, he had now to exert for his daily subsistence. Accordingly, in the towns he had to pass through on his way to Paris, he sold small pictures in distemper at a very low price, and painted the borders and ornaments of the rooms of private houses, but his gains were so inconsiderable, and his labours so severe, that on reaching Paris he was seized with a dangerous illness, the consequence of over exertion and bad or scanty sustenance, and was obliged to return to Andelys, where he remained nearly a year in his father's family, during which period he continued to paint, sometimes in distemper, sometimes in oil, for very low prices. His necessities forced him to adopt the practice of painting in distem-

per for the sake of expedition; and to his early practice of that method may in part be attributed the hardness observable even in his best pictures, at the same time that he owed to it much of his readiness and facility. It was probably during this period that he painted some of the pictures known to be his, in his first manner; such as those in the church of the Capuchins at Blois, and the Bacchanals, formerly at the castle of Chiverny.

As soon as his health permitted him seriously to resume his studies, he resolved if possible to go to Rome, where alone he could hope to see those antique models, which even then he felt were necessary to fix his taste, and to give him a knowledge of ideal beauty. He therefore set off for Italy, but went no farther than Florence, probably because his purse was exhausted, and the resources that had availed him in the country towns of France, could produce nothing in Italy,

at a time when painting was in such a state of perfection, that none but the best works could be sold to any advantage.

On his return to Paris he applied himself with greater ardour than ever to the study of the sciences connected with his art, — anatomy, optics, and perspective; and he was enabled to do this by the good offices of his friend Philippe de Champagne, who lodged with him in the college de Laon. Duchesne was at that time employed in the ornamental painting of the Luxemburgh palace, and had engaged Philippe de Champagne to assist him. He introduced Poussin to Duchesne, who was glad of so able and ready an assistant, and employed them both for some time. Poussin painted some little things in the ceilings, and Philippe de Champagne's works in the apartment of Mary of Medicis, executed at the same period, are extremely creditable to him. * But this

* Duchesne, who was a very bad painter, was so jealous

employment soon ceased, and as the journey to Rome was still the first wish of his heart, he resolved to set out once more with the little supply he had saved from what he had earned at the Luxemburgh. But this time he went no farther than Lyons, where having been detained by illness, not only all his little stock was spent, but he was obliged to borrow money from a merchant in that city, who supplied his wants on condition of his painting a certain number of pictures for him. He therefore remained there till he had fulfilled his promise, and continued to paint till he had gained a sufficient sum to enable him to return to Paris, where he at length obtained an opportunity of displaying his great talents.

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of the success of the two friends, that they were obliged to quit their employment, and de Champagne went to Brussels; but after Duchesne's death he returned to Paris, married Duchesne's daughter, and became painter to the queen, in which situation he remained till his death, which happened at the age of seventy-two.

In 1623 the Jesuits celebrated the canonization of Ignatius Loyola, and of St. Francis Xavier, and the pupils of their college at Paris, determined on that occasion to display the miracles of their patron saints in a series of pictures. Of these Poussin painted six in less than a week: his long practice in distemper painting gave him a decided superiority in readiness over the other artists employed on the occasion; and when the pictures came to be exhibited, although the details in his pictures were necessarily neglected on account of the haste with which they had been executed, they excited the greatest admiration on account of the grandeur of conception and elegance of design displayed in them, and obtained the preference over all the others, though executed by the best artists then in Paris.

From this period the reputation of Poussin, as a painter of genius, was established, and his acquaintance was sought by many of the literary men of the time.

Among these, Marino, commonly called the Chevalier Marini, became more particularly attached to him, and was not only useful to him as a patron, by recommending him to the notice of many eminent persons about the court, but contributed greatly to the improvement of his taste, by assisting him in acquiring a more complete knowledge of the Latin and Italian classics. Marini was born at Naples. Some political disturbances, in which he and his family had taken part, obliged him to quit that kingdom, and he took refuge successively in several of the petty courts of Italy. His talent for satire involved him in various literary disputes, as well as some political quarrels, and he never resided long in one place, until Mary of Medicis invited him to the court of France, where he passed the greater part of his life, and where he wrote the most of his poems, which, though licentious both in matter and style, contain numerous beauties, and are

full of classical imagery. Marini gave Poussin an apartment in his house, and, as his own health was at that time extremely deranged, he loved to have Poussin by the side of his couch, where he drew or painted, while Marini read aloud to him from some Latin or Italian author, or from his own poems, which Poussin illustrated by beautiful drawings, most of which it is to be feared are lost; though it is believed that there is still existing in the Massimi library, a copy of the Adonis in Marini's hand-writing, with Poussin's drawings interleaved. To this kind of study which he pursued with Marini, may perhaps be attributed his predilection for compositions where nymphs, and fairies, and bacchanals are the subjects; compositions in which he certainly excelled, and of which Reynolds says, that "no painter was ever better qualified to paint such subjects, not only from his being eminently skilled in the knowledge

of the ceremonies, customs, and habits of the ancients, but from his being so well acquainted with the different characters which those who invented them gave to their allegorical figures." (*Reynolds's Fifth Discourse.*)

The design which Poussin had formed to go to Rome was, however, not laid aside, but rather strengthened, as his knowledge of the beautiful in ancient writing increased. He longed to contemplate those forms in which the conceptions of the poets were embodied, and to study from the originals, those excellencies of which drawings and prints can convey so feeble an idea. Meantime he was preparing his mind for drawing every possible advantage from such studies. Aware that every man whose business is description, " ought not to be wholly unacquainted with that part of philosophy which gives an insight into human nature,

and relates to the manners, characters, and affections *;" he diligently applied himself to history and biography, transcribing and translating large portions from different authors for his own use: and he sought the conversation of such learned and ingenious men as were then to be found in the French court; an intercourse valuable to an artist above all others, whose time must necessarily be so much devoted to the practical part of his art, as to leave him little leisure for extensive reading or diligent study in books.

The speculative studies of a painter should be mingled with conversation and society, as his practice in painting should partake of study from the life, as well as from the fine forms of antiquity; otherwise, his conceptions will want ease and grace, as his painting would want colour and ani-

* Reynolds's Seventh Discourse.

mation. And this advantage Poussin eminently enjoyed during the period between his first acquaintance with Marini and his going to Rome. The time was short, indeed, being in all not twelve months; but the path was opened, and the vigorous mind of the painter, sensible of all its advantages, never forsook it.

It is remarkable that Marini was an Italian. Probably no French nobleman of the time would have received a painter into his house as his intimate friend. But the Italians have of all nations the least affectation. What they feel they express, to please themselves, without any consideration of what construction others may put on their actions. In France, where vanity, and in England, where pride, induces every man to consider and foresee his neighbour's judgment, it is difficult for an artist, whose reputation is not already established, to arrive at that intercourse with polite or learned society, which ought

to form a part of his education. The Italian painters, on the contrary, were courted into such society. Michel Angelo, in the palace of the Medici, while he received their patronage equally with Politian, was equally treated as their friend and companion; and that nothing vulgar ever enters into his conceptions, may, in part, be attributed to his constant intercourse with the politest and most learned men of his time. Hitherto, with the exception of very few instances, our English artists have been too much a people by themselves. If they look to nature for action or expression, it is to the exaggerated action and expression of the stage, or the mean and sordid action and expression of vulgar life that they have been driven. Hence, in part, the failure in most of our historical pictures: exaggeration on one hand, and want of dignity on the other. The excellence we have, that of colour, is perhaps the most seducing quality of painting; and it might be worth while

to enquire how far our national and local situation has contributed to form our school. Our landscape is agreeable, our people are handsome, especially in colour. Our poets have less of manner than either those of France or Italy, and they have written more directly from nature. Hence, as one art will always borrow something from another, it may be said, that the brilliant natural colour of the English school, has been assisted by the true imitations of nature of Shakspeare, and Fletcher *: as the illustrious friends, Ariosto and Titian, seem to have reflected light on each other;—both unequal, and sometimes incorrect in design, but glowing alike with colour, and freshness, and beauty.

* Of Fletcher's exquisite descriptive poetry one cannot speak too highly. See, particularly, "The Faithful Shepherdess;" which, besides its other merits, has this, that for pure English nothing but the "Sad Shepherd" can be compared with it.

At the end of the year 1623, Marini resolved to return to his native country: he had outlived most of those who had made his abode in Paris agreeable to him; and he was farther induced to do so, as his early friend, Maffeo Barberini, under the name of Urban VIII., then filled the papal chair. Add to these reasons, that Marini had become exceedingly infirm, and the natural wish to "die at home at last," led him to cross the Alps, even in the winter season, and to go directly to Rome. He pressed Poussin to accompany him; but, however agreeable this proposal might be to his wishes, the principles of honesty which regulated all his actions, prevented him from accepting it: he had promised to paint several pictures, and, till these were finished, he did not consider himself at liberty to leave Paris. One of these pictures was "the death of the Virgin;" perhaps the finest of his first manner: it was painted for the Goldsmiths' company,

who presented a picture every year to the cathedral of Notre Dame.

At length his industry and self-denial were rewarded by the accomplishment of his dearest wish; and in the spring of 1624 he joined Marini at Rome. But the poet, disappointed in his views of employment in the papal court, and worn out with sickness, was upon the point of retiring to Naples, where he died a very few months afterwards, having written his fine poem, the " Stragge degli Innocenti,"* as a penance, the only one his confessor would impose upon him, for the licentious songs and poems of his youth. Before he left Rome, he recommended Poussin strongly to Marcello Sacchetti, who undertook to present him to Cardinal Barberini, the pope's nephew ; which he did with the

* The beautiful translation of this poem, by Crashawe, was commended by Milton; and the Paradise Lost itself is not without passages we may suppose to have been partly borrowed from Marino, whose poem was not out of fashion when Milton visited Italy in 1638.

strongest expressions of encomium* ; and, although the Cardinal unfortunately left Rome almost immediately, on his legation to Spain, the introduction was of the greatest service to Poussin, as it opened to him the rich museum of his palace, and led to his acquaintance with the family Del Pozzo, who became his steady friends and patrons †. Meantime, however, Poussin found himself alone in Rome, Marini dead, the Cardinal in a foreign country, his own slender means exhausted by the journey from Paris, and as yet without friends or acquaintance. To relieve his pressing necessities, he sold two "battles," each containing a great number of figures, for seven crowns a-piece, and a "prophet" for less than two crowns. While a copy

* Some authors assert that Marino himself presented Poussin to the Cardinal, with the following words, "Vedrete un giovane chi ha una furia di Diavolo."

† Evelyn mentions Del Pozzo's cabinet in Rome, as rich in antiques and drawings. It is said to have contained drawings of every basso relievo then in Rome.

of that very picture, by another painter, fetched double the sum.

But, though unfortunate as to his pecuniary concerns, Poussin was lucky in the first intimacy he formed in Rome. He lodged in the same house with Francis Quesnoy, a Fleming, generally called, *Il Fiamingo*, a sculptor, intimately acquainted with Algarde *, to whom he introduced Poussin; and with these two intelligent artists he studied and measured most of the antique statues then in Rome. † From them also he occasionally received such pecuniary assistance as their slender means afforded, and from the want of

* Algarde is commonly looked upon as the architect of the Villa Panfili near Rome, without the Aurelian Gate. But this meagre design is by Gio F. Grimaldi, a Bolognese painter. — Memoirs of Santo Bartoli, published by Fea.

† Among the collection of strange things at Strawberry Hill, is, or was, a terra cotta bust of Poussin's wife, by Fiamingo, which had once been in Mariette's collection.

Reynolds bestows great praise on Fiamingo's St. Bartholomew in St. Peter's, for its breadth of light and shadow. — Northcote's Life of Reynolds, vol. i. p. 95.

which his unwearied exertions could not entirely preserve him. The sale of his battle pieces and his prophet, as we have seen, could avail him but little, nor could the sixty crowns which he received for his celebrated picture of "the Ark of God among the Philistines," have done much more than pay him for the expense of painting it. This work, which is one of his finest compositions, obtained considerable applause at Rome. It contains upwards of fifty figures, disposed in groupes of the most appalling interest; the sufferings of the people and the "mad disquietude" of their rulers are admirably expressed*; and the landscape and architecture of the back ground are antique and strange, such as might belong to Ashdod. The buildings in the fore part

* The fault of this picture, a fault for which Poussin has the example of Raffaelle as an excuse, is, that he has personified, not only the moral effect of the plague, but the effluvia of putrefaction. See Fuseli's fifth lecture, for excellent remarks upon this mistaken kind of expression.

of the scene are perhaps too Roman; but still they are so ancient, that they do not disturb the spectator by any approach to what is common or modern, and are in excellent harmony with the rest of the piece. The reputation of the painter rose considerably as soon as this picture came to be known; but it availed him but little as to his pecuniary affairs: he received no more than his sixty crowns, while the original purchaser sold it shortly after to the Duc de Richelieu for one thousand crowns.

Meantime Poussin, having resolved to begin anew his education as a painter, lost no opportunity of improvement. Besides his studies after the antique, which he pursued with Algarde and Quesnoy, he resumed that of optics, which he had begun at Paris, and consulted Alhazen, Vitellius, and Father Matteo Zoccolino, with such advantage, that it was long

imagined that he himself had composed a treatise on the subject. But the following letter, written after his death by his brother-in-law Jean Dughet, to M. de Chautelou, in answer to some enquiries he had made concerning any such treatise, proves that none such existed; and as it shows at the same time the pains he took to obtain whatever might aid his studies, and enlarge the stock whence he was to compose his pictures, we transcribe it here, because it was at this period that he more particularly devoted himself to these pursuits. — "You say that M. Cerisier informs you that he saw a book treating of light and shade by M. Poussin: this cannot be true. I have indeed some MSS. in my hands upon that subject, but they are not by M. Poussin. He got me to copy them from an original work in the library of Cardinal Barberini, the author of which is Father Matteo, Domenichino's master in perspective. He made me copy a good part of it before he

went to Paris, and I also transcribed Vitellius's rules for him. I know several persons have imagined that M. Poussin was the author; but that you may convince yourself of what I say, you will do me a favour to tell M. de Chambray, that if he pleases to look over them with you, I will send them by the courier; on condition, however, that they be returned as soon as you have examined them. All the French are persuaded that M. Poussin has left some treatise on painting; but do not believe it, sir. It is true that I frequently heard him talk of an intention to begin some work on art; but though I often reminded him of it, he always postponed it from time to time, till death put an end to all his projects." — Dated *January* 25. 1666.

He also began to apply himself diligently to the study of architecture, and though he was unacquainted with the majestic temples of Greece, the style he

formed to himself is so grand and impressive, that he has always been cited as worthy of imitation in this respect. Rome, with all her beauty and magnificence, is far from presenting perfect models in architecture, ancient or modern, if the portico to the Pantheon, and the three remaining columns of the Comitium, or rather the temple of Jupiter Stator, be excepted. And it was among the ruins of Rome only that Poussin studied. Hence in the picture of Æthra discovering to Theseus the secret of his birth, in the Florence gallery, the architecture, instead of that simple majestic Doric, of which the temples of Athens afford such grand specimens, is of the vicious misnamed Doric, whose proportions he found in the theatre of Marcellus, and has the defect of being ornamented with *little* parts. Nevertheless his architecture is never modern or vulgar, and the attention he bestowed upon this part of his art is well worthy

of imitation. He restored the antique temples, and made plans and accurate drawings of the fragments of ancient Rome, and there are few of his pictures where the subject admits of it, in which we may not trace the buildings, both of the ancient and the modern city. In the beautiful landscape of the death of Eurydice, the bridge and castle of St. Angelo, and the tower, vulgarly called that of Nero, form the middle ground of the picture. The castle of St. Angelo appears again in one of his pictures of the Exposing of Moses; and the pyramid of Caius Cestius, the Pantheon, the ruins of the Forum, and the walls of Rome, may be recognised in the Finding of Moses, and several others of his remarkable pictures.

Every hour that he could spare from his severer studies Poussin spent in the different villas in the neighbourhood of Rome, where, besides the most exquisite

remains of antique sculpture, he might enjoy the unrivalled landscape that surrounds that city, where every hill is classical, where the very trees have a poetic air, and where nothing reminds one of common nature; so much is it dignified by the noble wrecks, whose forms, and magnitude, and combinations excite in the soul a kind of dreaming rapture, from which it would not be awakened, and which those who have not felt can scarcely understand. In those delightful scenes he continued to meditate and to study, even to extreme old age. "I have often admired," said Vigneul de Marville, who knew him at a late period of his life, "the love he had for his art. Old as he was, I frequently saw him among the ruins of ancient Rome, out in the Campagna, or along the banks of the Tyber, sketching a scene which had pleased him; and I often met him with his handkerchief full of stones, moss, or flowers, which he carried home, that he might copy them

exactly from nature. One day I asked him, how he had attained to such a degree of perfection as to have gained so high a rank among the great painters of Italy? He answered, 'I have neglected nothing.'"

But all these he considered as subordinate to his chief object, which was, to acquire such an accurate knowledge of the human figure, as to draw it with ease and certainty. For this purpose he resumed the anatomical studies he had begun at Paris; and, under a skilful surgeon, Nicolas Larche, he began a new course of practical anatomy; at the same time reading Vessalius, and making extracts as he read. He had, afterwards, the advantage of studying the living model in the school of Domenichino, which was then the best in Rome; and he often visited that of Andrea Sacchi, on account of a model who sat there, and who was celebrated for the intelligence with which

he placed himself easily and gracefully in the prescribed attitudes. * He frequently modelled his subjects, that he might acquire a better knowledge of their true forms; and he is known to have modelled even from celebrated pictures, especially some beautiful children, in a picture of Titian, which was then in the Villa Ludovisi, but afterwards carried to Spain.

To form a style of his own, in manner and colour, he set about copying good pictures from very various masters. The Ludovisi Titian he copied as well as modelled; and, for some time, seemed inclined to follow the splendid colouring of that mas-

* The models in Rome are still celebrated for the skill with which they imitate the attitudes of the antique statues, and also the figures in the most celebrated pictures. In the latter case they teach their countenances to assume a wonderful likeness to the picture. The profession of a model is far from being disgraceful in Rome. Saverio Scaccia, the model chiefly used by Canova, is the very dandy of models, and prides himself on his beauty and on the ease with which he can assume any expression or posture. He is a good husband and father, and diligent and obliging in his profession.

ter. But he soon abandoned this method, and returned to that which appeared to him more suitable to the austere, but grand, style of art which he had chosen; and many antique pictures being found in the baths of Titus *, and elsewhere, he began to study them diligently; and, about the same time, made that copy of the Aldobrandini Marriage, which is now in the Palazzo Doria, in Rome.

The historical pictures of the ancients, that have been preserved to our times, are more like coloured sculpture than pictures. Their landscapes have different plans, and attempts at perspective sufficient to show that the art was not unknown to them. But the specimens we have are by no means sufficient to judge of the perfection to which it might have

* See Bartoli's Pitture Antiche, and also his Admiranda for the Coriolanus, &c. of the Baths of Titus, and the beautiful pictures that adorned the burial place of the Naso family.

been carried: we may, therefore, trust something to the account of painting left by the ancient writers. These are perpetually praising the illusions produced by their painters. Now there can be no illusion without perspective, both of form and shadow, therefore, they must have used both. Democritus and Anaxagoras both wrote on the artifice by which one may represent on a plane surface, parts that will appear to advance or recede. Vitruvius praises the skill of a painter who had made the scenes of a theatre appear large and wide, by means of painted pillars and domes. * But it appears that the art of perspective was not generally employed in the composition of historical pictures, which is, so far as we have the pieces preserved, more like that of basso relievo. † Poussin followed this taste to a

* See Perault's Vitruvius.

† This is particularly the case in the Aldobrandini marriage. There is more of grouping in the scene of "Orestes discovered by the reading of the letter," among

certain degree; but he enriched his pictures with back grounds, where the figures, however, still preserve the antique sculpture-like air. Poussin is indeed the painter of sculptors: they study and adopt his compositions; and thus render him again the honour and admiration he bestowed upon their art.

Poussin was of opinion that a "particular attention to colouring was an obstacle to the student in his progress to the great end and design of the art; and that he who attaches himself to this principal end will acquire, by practice, a reasonable good method of colouring." It is certain that some of his pictures are so coloured as to show that he might have excelled in colour, had he made that his object;

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the Herculaneum pictures. The Theseus appears to be composed on the same principle as the Laocoon. He is of heroic size, naked: the youths who are caressing his hands and arms, are as small in proportion as the sons of Laocoon.

and, probably, most of his pictures were fresher than we see them; for he was in the habit of using a dark-red ground, which, in many instances, has pierced through, and altered the tone; while some, which were painted on a white ground, have preserved their original brightness, particularly that picture of Moses striking the Rock, which he painted for Stella, a French artist, and an intimate friend, who has been called his pupil, though without reason, for he was only two years younger than Poussin, who never received any pupils. Stella was born at Lyons, and studied under his father *: he afterwards resided, for some years at Rome, where Poussin renewed the friendship begun during the days of his distress at Lyons, and did all that he could to forward Stella's views, in return for the kindness he had received at Lyons. Stella formed himself so much on Pous-

* Some writers, however, say, that Stella's father died two years after the birth of his son.

sin's manner, that some of his compositions have been attributed to him. But there is a weakness in Stella's works which sufficiently distinguishes them from those of his friend.*

Next to correctness of drawing, and dignity of conception, Poussin valued expression in painting. He placed Domenichino next to Raffaelle for that quality; and, shortly after his arrival in Rome, he set about copying the Flagellation of St. Andrew, painted by that master, in the

* When Stella was at Florence, on his way from Lyons to Rome, the Grand Duke Cosmo, being struck with the merit of some of his compositions, retained him for some time in his service, when he contributed a great deal to the embellishment of some of the ducal palaces. However, in 1623, he fulfilled his original design of going to study in Rome, where, some time after, he was imprisoned, in consequence of some youthful frolic. On his release he accompanied Marshal Crequy to Paris, intending to go to Lyons, and paint there for the rest of his life. But, on Poussin's declining the office of painter to Louis XIV., Stella was called to court, and that office conferred on him. He was soon afterwards knighted by the king. His picture of Solomon's Idolatry is at Houghton.

church of San Gregorio. It is well known that Domenichino painted that picture in competition with Guido, whose Martyrdom of the Saint is on the opposite side of the church, where the oldest specimen of painting in modern Rome had once existed in the portraits of the Father and Mother of Saint Gregory. * Poussin found all the students in Rome busily copying the Guido, which, though it has possibly fewer faults than its rival, wants the energy and expression that distinguish it: he was too sure of his object to be led away by the crowd, and turned his attention wholly to the Flagellation. † Domenichino, who Poussin imagined was dead, and who, in fact, was in a declining state

* See Gibbon's Decline and Fall.

† Had Domenichino never painted in fresco, the preference given to Guido might perhaps be justified: but, not to speak of the Flagellation, the history of Saint Cecilia, in the church of San Luigi de' Francesi in Rome, and the Demoniac Boy, where he has vied with Raffaelle, at Grotto Ferrata, are sufficient to justify Poussin's admiration.

of health, having heard that a young Frenchman was making a careful study from his picture, caused himself to be conveyed in his chair to the church, where he conversed for some time with him without making himself known. The result was honourable to both painters: from that day Poussin spent much of his time with Domenichino, studied in his school, enjoyed his friendship, and profited by his advice, until that great man's fatal journey to Naples, whither he went to paint for the chapel of St. Januarius, in the cathedral. The altar-pieces and compartments, the subjects of which are the Miracles of the Saint, are splendid specimens of the painter. One altar-piece alone is by Spagnoletto; that by Domenichino for the place, having been only sketched, when he died, as it is said, by poison.

But if the advice and example of Domenichino were valuable to Poussin, the good taste and courageous right-judg-

ing of Poussin, were not less so to the fame of Domenichino, who was then so persecuted and over-borne by the partisans of Guido, that his picture of the Communion of St. Jerome, had been torn from its place in the church of San Girolamo della Carità, and thrown into a garret, where it remained forgotten, until the monks, desirous of having a new altar-piece, requested Poussin to paint one for them, and sent him Domenichino's picture as old canvass to paint it upon. He no sooner saw it, than, struck with its extraordinary merit, he carried it to the church for which it had been painted, and gave a public lecture upon it, in which he dared to compare it with the Transfiguration, and called these two, with the Descent from the Cross, by Daniel de Volterra, the finest pictures in Rome. As to the accusation that the composition was a theft, from the sketch by the Carracci on the same subject, he showed that as the Carracci had never finished their picture,

and that as it was altered and improved in every particular, that was no ground for condemnation; for, far from injuring them by his appropriation of their idea, he had shown what a noble use might be made of it, and from it had composed one of the finest pictures in the world. The public had only to be roused by a steady, right-judging criticism; the elegant but weaker attractions of the rival school gave way, and Domenichino thenceforward was placed in his just rank among the great painters of Italy.*

Poussin had arrived in Italy at a time when the most cruel factions and jealousies raged among the artists of different schools. The first golden age of painting had passed away with Michael Angelo and Raffaelle. The art had revived under a

* See the last pages of Fuseli's Fifth Lecture, for an animated and just critique on the two pictures. Agostino Carracci's is now in the gallery of the Academy at Bologna. Domenichino's in the Vatican.

new and charming aspect among the Carracci themselves, the imitators of Correggio, and their scholars. Two of the most celebrated of these, Domenichino and Guido, divided the favour of the public; and so violent were the followers and adherents of the latter, that the tale that Domenichino was poisoned at Naples by Lanfranc has been generally believed. The party of Guido was the strongest, as might be expected, because the grace and tenderness which are so seductive in his pictures, are more apparent, and more easy of imitation than the higher qualities of Domenichino; but it was awed and kept within the bounds of decorum, as long as Cardinal Montalto lived. That discerning prelate acknowledged the merits and employed the talents of both schools, but after his death Cardinal del Monte openly favoured the enemies of Domenichino, and the most disgraceful excesses sullied the annals of painting for more than thirty years.

The prudence of Poussin kept him from being involved in any of the quarrels of the rival artists; but though he openly preferred Domenichino, as we have seen, he considered every thing worth remarking, and gained something from every painter. He was fastidious with regard to those who contented themselves with imitating common nature; and even of Caravaggio, he used to say, "that he had come into the world to destroy painting." His own view was always steadily fixed on the sublime. To gain this end, he sometimes neglects his colour, and light, and shadow; indeed many of his pictures have scarce any principal mass of light at all "His figures," says Reynolds, "are often too much dispersed, without sufficient attention to place them in groupes;" but then they are always useful in telling his story, or contributing to his expression; and as nothing is introduced merely for beauty or ornament, so nothing is neglected that can give dignity or pathos.

Meantime his reputation had been gradually increasing, and his amiable qualities had procured him not only the patronage, but the friendship of several distinguished persons, particularly of the family Del Pozzo, most of whom had a taste for the fine arts, and especially for whatever belonged to the antique. The Cavaliere del Pozzo*, had been employed by the Barberini family, to superintend the excavations and discoveries they were engaged in, in their new feof of Palestrina,

* Cassiano del Pozzo, afterwards the Commander del Pozzo. — In the Memoirs of Pietro Santi Bartoli, there is the following notice: —

" Nearly at the same time, in digging farther behind SS. Pietro and Marcellino, there was found an Egyptian temple, the figures of which were drawn by command of the Cavaliere Cassiano del Pozzo, the Mæcenas of his time, otherwise these, like many other memorials, would have been lost."

One branch of the family Del Pozzo was settled at Turin in Poussin's time. It is remarkable that one of the best very late artists in Italy, was a lady named Del Pozzo of Turin. — Lanzi regrets that he does not know her family.

the ancient Preneste, which they had purchased by a forced sale from the Colonna. The celebrated Prenestine mosaic pavement had been drawn on sixteen sheets, and presented by Del Pozzo, to the Barberini library, to which Poussin had access; and there are traces in several of his compositions, of the use he made of that precious pavement. In the Repose of the Holy Family in Egypt, he has introduced a tower and a procession, with little or no alteration from the Mosaic; and in one of the pictures of the Finding of Moses, the hunting of the Rhinoceros, in the back ground, is borrowed from the same.

The Mosaic itself is the work of Greek artists, and represents some scene in Africa, though whether a hunting match, the triumph of Alexander, the story of Helen and Menelaus, or that of Isis and Osiris, is doubtful. The temples

and buildings are Greek, and may perhaps justify Poussin for introducing Greek temples in his Egyptian scenes; at any rate, this circumstance accounts for his having done so. The Mosaic was placed by Sylla in the temple of Fortune, of which much of the ground-plan still exists, and more was to be traced in Poussin's time. Till the reign of Boniface VIII. the upper part of the temple remained entire, and the restorations which were composed on the acquisition of the feof by the Barberini must have been well known to Poussin; for we see the semicircular building of the upper temple introduced into many of his landscapes, and that without any material variation. * But the great pavement was not the only Mosaic picture discovered at Palestrina at that time; in an adjoining garden a very beau-

* Perhaps that building, after all, is one of the ends of the Vatican, which itself may have been borrowed from Palestrina. See the history of Preneste, by Suares.

tiful group representing Europa just carried off by the Bull, with her companions on the beach, grieving and entreating her to return, was found and carried to the Barberini palace in Rome*, where, a little before, a curious antique picture had been discovered in the garden. It is a landscape, with a good deal of architecture. The plate in Bartoli's Pitture Antiche will show how much use Poussin has made of it.

Poussin had now full liberty to study in the Barberini Museum, which contain-

* Palestrina, as it was the first place where the art of Mosaic was practised in Italy, so it has always maintained a reputation for the best workers in that art. Fabio Cristofori, celebrated in the time of which we are treating, was a native of that city, and executed many Mosaics in the churches of Rome, particularly that of St. Peter's of the Vatican; his son Pietro Paolo succeeded him, and was knighted for his excellence in the art by Clement XI. This man founded the school of Mosaic which has imitated so successfully the sublimest productions of the pencil, and has given durability to the perishable colours of the first artists.

ed some of the finest specimens of ancient art, as well as a choice collection of pictures, many of which have now found their way to England. Gems, cameos, and statues abounded in that rich gallery, which, among other things precious for beauty and rarity, possessed the beautiful vase now in the British Museum, and known under the name of the Portland Vase. It was found in a sepulchre called the Monte di Grano, on the road from Rome to Frascati, and was long considered as an entire precious stone. But is now ascertained to be of glass, and the figures in relief, of a beautiful opaque white, seem rather to have been chiselled than moulded. Sir W. Hamilton brought it to England thirty years since, when it was purchased by the Duchess of Portland. The Duke of Portland placed it in the British Museum in the year 1810. Kircher, who was living at this time, and eager in his antiquarian pursuits, brought

to light many treasures of ancient art. The curious engraved vase placed by him in the Jesuits' college was a study in itself. The Prenestine pavement, which was too large to be brought to Rome, was carefully removed from the stable where it was discovered, to the hall of the Barberini Palace at Palestrina, and a correct drawing was, as we have seen, deposited in the Cardinals' library in Rome. Other Mosaics and paintings were carefully collected. The decaying flame of Roman pride, which has for centuries rested like the dead lights of a cemetery over her ruins, burned more vividly at that season, than for some time before, or since. And no wonder Poussin was allured to follow and regard it as a thing divine.

A trifling incident which occurred at this period, had probably some share in confirming Poussin's resolution of spend-

ing the remainder of his life in Rome. The court of France was at that time at variance with the Holy See, and a considerable acrimony existed among his Holiness's troops against all Frenchmen; consequently, wherever they met them in Rome, they instantly attacked them with sticks and stones, and sometimes with even more formidable weapons. It happened one day that as Poussin and three or four of his countrymen were returning from a drawing excursion, they met at the Quattro Fontane near Monte Cavallo, a company of soldiers, who, seeing them dressed in the French costume, instantly attacked them. They all fled but Poussin, who was surrounded, and received a cut from a sabre between the first and second finger. Passeri, who relates the anecdote, says, that the sword turned, otherwise a "great misfortune must have happened both to him and to painting." Not daunted, however, he fought under the shelter of his portfolio, throwing

stones as he retreated, till the passengers taking his part, he made good his escape to his lodging. From that day he put on the Roman dress, adopted the Roman way of living, and became so much a Roman, that he considered the city as his true home.

The severe course of study in which he had engaged was now interrupted by a tedious illness, which disabled him from much exertion, and he began anew to feel the pressure of poverty, as we learn from the following letter written to the Commander del Pozzo.

" Perhaps you may think me troublesome, because, after having received so many favours from your family, I still write, and each time to ask for something. But as I believe that what you have done for me proceeds from the goodness, generosity, and compassion of your nature, I have taken upon me to write once more,

not being able to wait upon you on account of an illness that has seized me, to entreat you earnestly to send me some assistance, being in great want on account of my infirmities, and having nothing to live on but the labours of my hands. I have drawn the elephant *, and as you seemed to wish for it, I will present it to you. There is a Hannibal on his back in antique armour. I think of your drawings every day, and shall soon finish some of them.

" Your most humble servant,

" Pussino."

In answer to this letter he received forty crowns; but his illness continuing, and rather increasing, he seemed to have little hopes of recovery, when a countryman, Jean Dughet, who was cook to the Roman senator †, removed him from

* This is probably the Elephant of the Borghese Garden. It is introduced in " the Repose in Egypt."

† In the Memoire di Pietro Santi Bartoli, published by

uncomfortable lodgings to his own house, and, together with his wife, bestowed on him all the care and kindness they could have shewn to a son.

Fea, No. 82., contains the following anecdote concerning Dughet: — " Quasi chi contiguo a Capo di Bove, alla mano dritta, in tempo d' Urbano VIII. furono carcerati molti curiosi de' tesori, i quali trovarono una stanza con molti ornamenti di argento: ma fattogli la spia poco la goderono, che la più parte fu messa nelle carceri. Solo ne fu esente il suocero di Monsù Possino, e padre di Gaspro famoso paisista, in riguardo che serviva di cuoco il senatore." Fea thinks that this is the same incident mentioned by Flaminio Vacca, No. 81., but that cannot be; for Vacca's account was published in the year 1594, the same in which Poussin was born. Vacca's story relates that four men were diligently employed for several nights, digging in the circus of Caracalla; that they concealed themselves among the ruins in the day, and at dark came to a little inn near Capo di Bove, supped and lit their lanthorn. Only one of them ever spoke, which excited the curiosity of the host, who watched them, and having discovered their employment, gave notice to the government; the searchers seeing themselves discovered desisted from their labours, and were heard of no more. The common opinion about Rome was, that the three silent men were Goths, who had come from the north on the faith of ancient tradition, to seek for treasure.

Under their hospitable roof he recovered, and six months afterwards he married their eldest daughter, Maria Dughet. They had no children, but Poussin adopted his wife's brother Gasper, seventeen years younger than himself, who assumed his name, and followed his steps as a landscape painter with singular success. With part of his wife's portion Poussin bought a small house, situated on the Trinita de' Monti, formerly the Pincian-hill, a situation admirably adapted for painters, commanding the finest views of Rome. * Here, with the exception of the period of his journey to Paris, Poussin passed the remainder of his life in a tranquil course of alternate labour and easy intercourse with his friends.

Meantime the Cardinal Barberini re-

* Next door to it is the house of Salvator Rosa. Opposite are those of Claude Lorraine and the Zuccheri; in which last, under the patronage of M. Bertholdy, the German artists have revived with considerable success the art of painting in fresco.

turned from his mission to France and Spain, and, mindful of his promise to Marini concerning Poussin, shewed him much kindness; and not only gave him employment himself, but procured him the commission to paint one of the pictures to be executed in Mosaic in the Church of St. Peter's. The subject is the martyrdom of St. Erasmus, the only one of his works that Poussin ever marked with his name; and he did that, as he said, to prevent his feeble production from being ignorantly taken for the work of any of the great men who had adorned that splendid building. One of the most remarkable pictures he painted for Cardinal Barberini, is the Death of Germanicus; a subject full of interest, and finely treated. Perhaps the Germanicus is too like an ordinary dying man *; there is too much of

* Poussin, who aimed at expression and the power of moving the passions, was fond of those pathetic circumstances attending a death-bed. His success in "the Death of Germanicus," "the Death of Eudamidas," and the "Sacra-

sickness, too much of bodily suffering, for a Roman hero's death; but all the attendants, their expression, and the accessaries, are in the very best style of composition. The picture, which is still in the Palazzo Barberini in Rome, has become very dark, and is now ill placed in a room hung with striped yellow satin, where there is also a beautiful sketch, by Poussin, of a Bacchanalian subject.

The friendship of the Commander del Pozzo procured for Poussin access to all the public libraries, and collections of medals and manuscripts, and by the most delicate means, sought to promote his fortune and extend his fame. He engaged him to decypher the difficult manuscripts of Leonarda da Vinci, then in the Barberini library. And to him we

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ment of Extreme Unction," justify his choice of such subjects, even without the example of the ancient painter which he used to quote.

owe the publication of that great man's art of painting, for which he made a number of designs, illustrative of the theory of the author. Nor was Poussin wanting in gratitude to his generous protector, he painted a number of pictures for him; among others, the first and smallest series of the Seven Sacraments *, at different intervals; and he also made drawings for him of many of the antiquities of Rome. For the Marquis Amadeus del Pozzo, of Turin, Poussin painted "the Passage through the Red Sea," and "the setting up of the Golden Calf in the Wilderness." The first of these contains an astonishing number of figures, most of them in action, and all so occupied with the miracle, that the want of grouping seems to be a natural and almost a necessary consequence of the confusion occasioned by the strange event. Perhaps the principal

* Now in the possession of the Duke of Rutland, into whose collection they came from that of Boccapaduli at Rome.

figure, Moses stretching his hand over the sea, is too far from the centre of the picture; but had he been otherwise placed, there would have been nothing on one side to balance the crowd of Israelites on the other, without some of that artificial composition, which Poussin had too much good taste to employ.

Of the subject of the Golden Calf, there are two pictures by Poussin, entirely differing from each other; but in both he has displayed his profound knowledge of the rites of antique worship, and there are parts in both where he has adapted whole figures from the ancients to his own purposes * with excellent effect. Indeed

† The first picture of the Golden Calf, where the dancers surround the image, has been engraved by Poilly. The second, where the people are kneeling in adoration, and the young priest is burning the sacred cake, has been twice engraved, by Boudet, and by Deel. The figure of the young priest is taken from an antique bas-relief, formerly in the Villa Borghese; it is only altered

these are the subjects in which he excels, triumphs, dances, and antique revelry.

In 1638 Cardinal Richelieu, whose vanity, if not his taste, made him anxious to appear the protector and encourager of the fine arts, suggested to Louis XIII. the the plan of finishing the Louvre, restoring and beautifying all the royal palaces, and adorning them with pictures; in short, of accomplishing the magnificent designs of Francis I. The reputation of Poussin was at this time so great, that he was immediately fixed upon as the proper person to execute the most material part of these designs, and to superintend the rest; accordingly the Cardinal caused several persons of distinction, who had known Poussin in Rome, to write to him, and endeavour to induce him to quit that

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by being a boy instead of a female figure; but the attitude, action, and attire are unchanged. See Bartoli's Admiranda. Richardson saw this picture in Flinck's collection at Rotterdam, and praises it highly.

city, and establish himself in Paris. But he was too much attached to his quiet home, and to the habits and manners of his adopted country, to be easily prevailed on to quit it, and it was not until the beginning of 1639, when Louis XIII. formally appointed him his first painter, that he resolved to accept the offers of the French court. The letter of M. de Noyers, secretary of state, and superintendant of the public works, inviting Poussin to Paris, was in the following flattering terms : —

" Sir,

" When the king did me the honour to appoint me superintendant of his public works, it immediately occurred to me to make use of the power that situation gives me, to restore the honour of the arts and sciences ; and as I have a particular love for painting, I resolved to caress her as a well-beloved mistress, and to present her with the first-fruits of my

labours. You have heard from your friends on this side the Alps, that I begged them to write to you as from me, and to say that I looked for justice from Italy, and that she should at least restore to us our own that she has detained so many years, and also that I trusted she would give us farther satisfaction, by sending us also some of her own children. You perceive by this that I meant M. Poussin, and some other good Italian painter. And in order to mark still more strongly the personal esteem which the king entertains for you, and for such rare and virtuous men as resemble you, I caused a letter, which I confirm by this, to be written to you, to serve as an earnest of the promise made you, till on your arrival I should put into your hands the king's brevet and commission. By these letters you will learn that I shall send you a thousand crowns for the expenses of your journey; that you will receive a thousand crowns yearly salary, and an apart-

ment in the king's house, either in the Louvre, at Paris, or at Fontainebleau, as you please; that I shall have it conveniently furnished before the time you occupy it, if you please; but this at your choice; that you shall paint neither ceilings nor vaults, and that you shall only be engaged for five years, according to your desire; though I hope that, when you have once breathed the air of your native country, you will find it difficult to quit it. You now clearly perceive, as you desired, the conditions proposed to you. One only remains for you to learn, it is, that you will paint for nobody but by my permission, for I send for you for the king, and not for private persons: this does not preclude your painting for others, but I mean that you cannot do so without my leave. After all, come cheerfully, and be assured you will find more pleasure here than you can imagine.

(Signed) "DE NOYERS.

"Dated at Ruel,
Jan. 14. 1639."

Letter from the King to Poussin.

"DEAR AND WELL BELOVED,

"Some of our especial servants having made a report to us of the reputation which you have acquired, and the rank which you hold among the best and most famous painters of Italy; and we being desirous, in imitation of our predecessors, to contribute, as much as lies in us, to the ornament and decoration of our royal houses, by fixing around us those who excel in the arts, and whose attainments in them have attracted notice in the places where those arts are most cherished, do therefore write you this letter, to acquaint you that we have chosen and appointed you to be one of our painters in ordinary, and that, henceforward, we will employ you in that capacity. To this effect our intention is, that on the receipt of this present, you should dispose yourself to come hither, where the services you per-

form shall meet with as much consideration as do your merits and your works, in the place where you now reside. By our order, given to M. de Noyers, you will learn more particularly the favour we have determined to shew you. We will add nothing to this present, but to pray God to have you in his holy keeping.

"Given at Fontainebleau,
Jan. 15, 1639."

It appears singular that nearly two years should elapse from the date of these letters, before Poussin went to Paris. But his reluctance to move from home was so great, that it would probably have been much longer before he would have conquered it, had not his intimate friend, M. de Chantelou, who had a place in the king's household, been sent to Rome to fetch him. This gentleman, who was a lover of painting, no sooner saw the series of the Sacraments, belonging to the

Commander del Pozzo, than he requested Poussin to procure the Commander's permission to have them copied, leaving the choice of the artist to Poussin, if he would not undertake to do it himself. The Commander, however, was unwilling to trust them to another artist; and Poussin preferred painting a new series to copying his own compositions. He did not execute this work, however, till some years afterwards, when he produced a new series different in design from the former. This last is the set now in the possession of the Marquis of Stafford, and which was once in the Orleans gallery. Of the two, M. de Chambray says, "travellers are often asked, whether the Seven Sacraments at Rome are finer than those at the Palais Royal? The question is too vague to be answered. These sublime compositions have varieties, advantages, and slight imperfections which counterbalance each other. Those at Rome are censured for their defective colouring, and the

hardness of the execution; but in delicacy of conception, and beauty of expression, they make up for what they might lose in other points if compared with those in France. *

But the delay of Poussin's journey to Paris, while it increased the impatience of the court for his arrival, must have added considerably to his reputation; for among other pictures, painted in the interval, was that of "the Israelites gathering Manna in the Wilderness," for M. de Chantelou. While he was painting it he wrote the following letter, describing it, to Stella:—

"I have invented for M. de Chantelou's picture a certain distribution of parts, and certain natural accidents, which display the misery and famine to which

* Richardson, who admired both sets exceedingly, prefers the small series on the whole.

the people of Israel were reduced, and also their subsequent joy and delight; the admiration with which they are seized; their respect and veneration for their legislator; with a mixture of men, women, and children, of various ages and complexions, which, I imagine, will not displease those who are able to read them."

The judgment of the Royal Academy of Painting, at Paris, concerning this picture, is on record. In 1667, that is, three years after the death of the painter, the picture of "the Gathering Manna in the Wilderness," was given as the subject of a conference of the academy. Many persons of rank, as well as men of learning and talents, attended to hear the interesting discussion, the result of which was a declaration, that the drawing was excellent, and the proportions of the figures comparable to the most beautiful statues of antiquity. Particular commendation was bestowed upon the address with which

Poussin had adapted to his subject the very figures of the Laocoon, the Niobe, the Seneca, the Antinous, the Wrestlers, the Diana, the Apollo, and the Venus de Medicis, and had thus peopled the desert with the grandest and the most beautiful forms. Thus the opinion of the painter, expressed in the letter above quoted, that his picture was worthy of success, was publicly and honourably confirmed.

At length, in December, 1640, Poussin, in company with M. de Chantelou, set off for Paris, taking with him a younger brother of his wife's, John Dughet * as his secretary, and leaving his family and affairs under the especial care of the commander Del Pozzo. The reception he met with at the French court was most flattering; but as it will be most interesting to the reader in his own words, the following letter is subjoined. —

* Jean Dughet was an engraver of some merit.

To the Commander Del Pozzo.

" Full of confidence in the good-will which you have always shewn me, I think it my duty to give you an account of the fortunate success of my journey, as well as of my situation, and the place I inhabit, that you, my kind protector, may know where to lay your commands on me. My health was very good during the whole journey from Rome to Fontainebleau, where I was very honourably received in the palace by a nobleman deputed for that purpose by M. de Noyers; from thence I was taken to Paris in that minister's coach, and had scarcely arrived when he came out to meet me, embraced me in a friendly manner, and showed very great pleasure at seeing me in France. At night I was conducted by his orders to the place he had destined for my apartment: it is a little palace, for so it may be called, in the midst of the gar-

den of the Thuilleries, containing nine chambers on three stories, without reckoning the ground floor, which consists of a kitchen, a porter's lodge, a hall, and three convenient rooms for domestic purposes. There is, besides, a beautiful and spacious garden, planted with fruit trees and vegetables of all kinds, a pretty plot of flowers, three little fountains, a well, a very handsome court, and a stable. I have a beautiful view from my windows, and I can imagine that in summer this retreat must be a perfect paradise. I found the centre apartment furnished nobly, and all necessary provisions laid in, even to firewood and a cask of old wine. For three days my friends and I were entertained at the king's expense. The fourth day M. de Noyers presented me to the Cardinal, who took my hand, embraced me, and treated me with extraordinary condescension. A few days afterwards I was taken to St. Germains, where M. de Noyers was to have presented me to the king; but M. de

Noyers being indisposed, I was not introduced until the next day, when M. le Grand, one of the court favourites, presented me. The good and gracious prince deigned to caress me, and asked me a great many questions, during the half-hour he kept me with him; after which, turning round to the court, he said, '*I think we have taken in Vouet*,' and then he ordered me to paint the great pictures for his chapel of Fontainebleau and St. Germains. When I went home they brought me two thousand crowns in gold, in a handsome blue velvet purse. One thousand for my salary, and one thousand for my journey, without reckoning my expenses. And indeed, money is very necessary in this country, where every thing is extremely dear.

"I have now turned my thoughts upon the works I am to execute: they are pictures, cartoons for tapestry, and many other things. I shall have the honour of

sending you a specimen of my first labours as a tribute of gratitude, and as soon as my packages arrive, and I am relieved from uneasiness on account of them, I hope to portion my time in such a manner as to employ a part of it in the service of your brother the Chevalier.

"I recommend my little household interests to your care, since you deign to take charge of them during my absence, which shall not be long if I can help it. I beseech you, since you are born to be kind to me, to bear, with your usual generous patience, the trouble I must give you, and to content yourself in return with my entire affection. May the Lord grant you a long and happy life. As to me, with all the respect of which I am capable, &c. &c. &c.

"POUSSIN.

"Paris, Jan. 6th, 1641."

Another letter, written the next day, is as follows.

" The respect I have for you, most reverend and illustrious Sir, has caused me already to signify to you our safe arrival in Paris, and the courteous reception I met with from M. de Noyers. The next day he presented me to the Cardinal Richelieu, who showed me extraordinary favour, and a few days after I was taken to M. de Noyer's villa, in order that he might introduce me to the king; but finding himself indisposed, in the morning he desired M. de Chantelou to take me to St. Germains, where, soon after my arrival, I was presented by M. le Grand, the king's favourite. Modesty will not allow me to tell you how very graciously his majesty received me. At length we returned to Ruel, where, having remained a good while in M. de Noyer's chamber, he conversed with me on

various subjects, particularly on Rome and the most remarkable persons there. Recollecting your name, he praised your talents, and professed, that he should be proud of doing any thing to serve you at any time. It might therefore be advisable that I should have an exact account of your matters, in Piedmont, in order that something may be done with regard to them on the very first opportunity. M. de Chantelou having mentioned the kindness you had shown to him and his brother, had not only disposed him to do the little you wished, but I believe that you will receive still farther proofs of his esteem. A copy of the list of Pirro Ligurio's books has been sent to Turin, and the answer is expected.*

* These books contained drawings and descriptions of all the antiquities of Rome. The drawings were originals by Ligurio himself; they were, till of late years, and perhaps may be so still, in the Royal library at Turin. There was also a fine copy in the Vatican library. This Pirro was a cotemporary of Michael Angelo, and was employed by Clement IX.

"We are hourly expecting our packages, and as soon as they arrive I shall go to work upon your little picture of Baptism, having no greater pleasure in the world than that given me by any opportunity of serving you. I beg you to continue your kind concern for my interest, and to believe that I shall esteem myself most happy as long as your regard continues for me, and bound to pray to God for the increase of your prosperity.

"NICHOLAS POUSSIN.

"Paris, 7th Jan. 1641."

Shortly after Poussin's arrival in Paris, the king promoted him to the rank of his first painter, in order to mark his particular esteem for him, and gave him the title of superintendant of all the works of painting for the decoration and restoration of the royal houses, and confirmed these favours by the following brevet, dated in March, 1641.

"This day, the 20th March, 1641, the king being at St. Germain en Laye, and desiring to testify the particular personal esteem he entertained for the Sieur Poussin, whom he invited to come from Italy on the special knowledge he had of the great degree of excellence to which he had attained in the art of painting; not only by means of the arduous studies he has pursued in all the sciences necessary to its perfection, but also through the natural inclination which God has given him for the arts; his majesty has chosen and retained him to be his first painter in ordinary, and in that capacity has given him the general direction of all the works of painting and of embellishment that he may henceforward order for the decoration of his royal houses: ordering also that none of his other painters shall execute any of their works for his majesty without having first submitted their designs to the said Sieur Poussin, and re-

ceived his directions and advice thereupon. And, in order to give him the means of maintaining himself in his service, his majesty grants him the sum of three thousand livres, as a yearly salary, which shall henceforth be paid him by the treasurers of his public works, each in the year of his authority, as is customary, and as it was paid him this year: And, to this effect, the said sum of three thousand livres shall henceforth be entered and accounted for, under the name of the said Sieur Poussin, in the statement of accounts of the said public works. His majesty has also granted to the Sieur Poussin the house with the garden lying in the middle of his majesty's gardens of the Thuilleries, which was heretofore occupied by the Sieur Menou. In testimony whereof his majesty has commanded me to issue this present brevet to the Sieur Poussin, which will be signed by his majesty's hand, and countersigned by me, his counsellor and secretary of state, and

of his commands and finance, and superintendant, and director of his public buildings.

"LOUIS."
"DE NOYERS."

The arrival of Poussin was immediately followed in Paris by an extraordinary activity in pursuing the projects conceived by Francis I. for the encouragement of the fine arts. Francis, it is well known, endeavoured to fix in his court some of the first artists of Italy. Leonardo da Vinci died in his arms. Benvenuto Cellini, who had originally been recommended to him by the poet Alamanni, was employed to design the gates, fountains, &c. for Fontainebleau; and many other men of genius were encouraged to settle in Paris. Copies of the most precious statues and bas-reliefs of Rome, as well as of the finest pictures in Italy were now ordered. There was an idea of copying the Trajan column, and the Arch

of Constantine; but the most splendid project was that of casting the colossal statues of Monte Cavallo in bronze, and to place them at the gate of the Louvre.

Poussin's own labours began by some cartoons to be copied in tapestry for the king's chamber. The subjects prescribed were from the Old Testament, and in order to facilitate their execution, he was permitted to repeat the compositions of several of his former pictures, such as "the gathering the Manna in the Wilderness," "the Setting up of the Golden Calf," and "Moses striking the Rock." We have to regret the loss of these cartoons, which were of the same size as those of Raffaelle. The task of designing frontispieces for the books printed at the royal printing office was also assigned to Poussin. The first he furnished was that to the Bible, printed early in 1642, commonly known by the name of the Bible of Sixtus V.; and he afterwards designed those for the

Horace and the Virgil, printed about the same time. But an extract from one of his letters to Del Pozzo, dated 20th September, 1641, will best show the nature of his employment. "I am labouring without intermission, sometimes at one thing, sometimes at another. I should do this willingly, but that they hurry me in things that require time and thought. I assure you, that if I stay long in this country, I must turn dauber like the rest here. As to study and observation, either of the antique or of any thing else, they are unknown, and whoever wishes to study or to excel must go far from hence. The stuccoes and painting of the Great Gallery are begun after my designs, but very little to my satisfaction, because I can get no one to second me, although I make drawings both on a large and a small scale for them. I have put the Last Supper in its place, that is, in the chapel of St. Germains, and it succeeds very well. I am now at work upon the picture

for the noviciate of the Jesuits: it is very large, containing fourteen figures larger than nature, and this they want me to finish in two months."

The subject of this large picture is one of the miracles of St. Francis Xavier in Japan, where he restores the daughter of a nobleman to life. It was finished at the prescribed time, and the admiration it met with was the first signal for all who envied Poussin's good fortune and reputation to commence those persecutions against him, which rendered his abode at Paris disagreeable, and at length drove him from it. Before his arrival in that capital, Vouet * had enjoyed the favour of

* Simon Vouet was born in Paris, 1582, studied under his father, who was a bad painter. In 1602 he accompanied the French ambassador to Constantinople, where he painted the Grand Signor, chiefly, however, from memory. On his return from Turkey, he was for some time at Venice, and afterwards at Rome, where he was elected Prince of the Academy of St. Luke. His reputation engaged Louis XIII. to send for him to Paris, where he not only appointed him his first painter, but took lessons

the court, and the undivided applause of the public; but, on this occasion, a picture he had painted for the same church was overlooked, and that of Poussin excited the greatest enthusiasm, on account of its expression, which was said to "charm the ignorant gazer as well as the connoisseur." Vouet and his party, however, criticised it in the severest manner, both in public and in private, alleging particularly, that the "Christ in the Glory" had more the air of Jupiter Tonans, than of the meek and mild God of Mercy. The colouring was censured as opake, and the outline as dry, and wanting in feeling. Poussin, who disdained the petty arts which might have soothed calumny, or have procured partizans, answered his critics openly and fearlessly. "Those,"

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in drawing from him. His principal merits were great facility and freedom; but he had neither expression, colour, nor drawing. His best works were painted in Rome. Vouet's pupils were Mignard, Dorigny, Perrier, Dufresnoy, Le Brun, and Le Sueur.

said he, " who assert that the Christ in my picture is more like a thundering Jupiter, than a God of Mercy, may be assured that I shall never fail in careful endeavours to give my figures expressions conformable to what they are intended to represent; but I neither can nor ought to imagine Christ in any situation whatever, with the face of a whining methodist *, or a begging friar, seeing that while he was on earth, it was scarcely possible to endure the brightness of his countenance."

Notwithstanding the clamours of Vouet, the king and queen openly took the part of Poussin's pictures. " My works," he says, in a letter to the Commander del Pozzo, " have been exceedingly well received; the king and queen have been loud in their praises of the Last Supper, which I painted for the royal chapel, looking

* The original expression, though not the same, is synonymous.

upon it, as they graciously say, as a child of their own. Cardinal Richelieu is also satisfied with his pictures, and thanked me for them, and complimented me in the presence of Monsignore Mazzarini." But many of the tasks imposed on him appear to have been sufficiently irksome. "The employment given me," says he, "is not so important but that they take me from it to superintend new designs for tapestry. I wish they would give me something to do where lofty and noble designs could be employed; but, to say the truth, there is nothing here that deserves staying long for." In another letter he says, "The readiness that these gentlemen perceive in me, has induced them to leave me no time, either to satisfy myself, or to do any thing for a private friend or patron. They employ me for ever in trifles, such as frontispieces for books, designs for ornamental cabinets, chimney-pieces, bindings of books, and other nonsense. Sometimes, indeed, they propose grander sub-

jects, but, *fair words butter no parsnips* * *!* They tell me these things are mere recreation for me, paying me with fine speeches, and do not look upon those jobs which are really wearisome and laborious as any thing. Before he went away M. de Noyers desired me to paint a Madonna, according to my own taste, in order, as he says, that people may say "the Madonna of Poussin," as they say "the Madonna of Raffaelle." Besides, he wanted me to paint a picture for the chapel of the congregation of the Jesuits; but the place is so narrow and so dark that one cannot do any thing good with it. In short, it would seem that they do not know what to employ me upon, having no fixed design when they sent for me; and I fancy they think that since I did not bring my wife with me, that I should go back if they gave me an opportunity of earning enough money.

* The Italian proverb used in the original letter is,—
Belle parole e cativi fatti,
Ingananno savi e matti.

Be this as it may, whether I succeed to the full extent of what I wished to do by coming or not, I shall have fulfilled part of my design, and my journey at least has been amply repaid. The other day I had a letter from M. de Noyers, who tells me that, (as I had complained before his departure of the sort of petty employment that was little more than a waste of time,) his majesty consents that, as soon as I have formed the general design for the great gallery, I should commission my friend M. Lemer, by whom you have a picture, of I forget what ruins, to act under me, in order that I may be at liberty to attend to the designs and pictures of the Seven Sacraments for the royal tapestry. I don't know how this plan will succeed. You may perceive, by what I tell you, that here they are that kind of animal that follows the leader."

This letter is dated 4th April, 1642, about which period he fixed the plan

for the decorations of the Thuilleries. The production of that plan was the signal for the rivals and enemies of Poussin to begin those attacks against him, which terminated in his return to Rome. Vouet's jealousy with regard to the principal pictures was not to be doubted, nor was it unnatural. And the vanity of Le Mercier, the architect, was perhaps too little spared in the alterations and reductions recommended by Poussin, not to irritate that artist, who, although he possessed considerable merit, wanted taste. But the coxcombry of Fouquieres, a good landscape painter for the time, who prided himself upon some pretensions to family *, and who always painted with his sword by his side, seems to have been as tormenting as it was

* He pretended to be descended from the Fuggers or Fouquers, rich bankers, who, having furnished considerable sums of money to the Emperor Maximilian I., had been ennobled by that Emperor. The family seem to have been sufficiently ridiculous, for Rabelais has made merry at their expense.

ludicrous. Presuming on his rank and talent, he took upon himself the office of director of the works in the gallery. Poussin, who knew his real history, used to laugh at him and call him *Baron*. "The Baron de Fouquieres," he says, in a letter to M. de Noyers, "came to me with his usual conceit; he thinks it very odd that any thing should have been begun in the gallery without consulting him, and says he has an order from the king, countersigned by the minister, and that his pictures are consequently to form the principal decoration of the place, all others being merely accessaries." The truth is, that Fouquieres' order required him to paint views of the principal towns in France on the piers between the windows.

Meantime the perseverance of Poussin in insisting on the alteration of some of Le Mercier's ornaments, and the removal of others, appears to have brought the

rage of his rivals against him to a crisis. The following extracts from one of his memorials to M. de Noyers on the subject, show the ground of his opinions as to the necessary alterations, and at the same time that of the wounded vanity of Le Mercier; while they assert his own dignity, and repel the insinuations of his enemies. "Although I have nothing to fear from my enemies, since, by the grace of God, I have acquired a property, that, not being an ordinary gift of fortune, cannot be taken from me, but in possession of which I may go wherever I please; the pain of feeling that I am not well treated, obliges me to expose the absurdity of my calumniators. Nothing can be so monstrous as what Le Mercier has begun in the gallery: the dull and disagreeable heaviness of the whole; the lowness of the vault, which looks as if it would fall and crush you; the extreme coldness of the composition; the poor, dry, and melancholy aspect of the parts, and

certain opposite and incongruous things put together, are such that neither reason nor common sense can endure them. There is no variety, no support; there are neither union nor consequence; the size of the compartments bears no proportion to their distance. These compartments, placed in the centre of the vault, are immediately over the heads of the spectators, and would blind them, if they were to look up at them. All that I have suppressed was faulty. The architect having confined himself to adhere to certain *consoles* which run along the cornice, and which are not equal, there being four on one side, and five on the other, it was impossible to make any thing good of it while these insuperable defects were allowed to remain." He ends his letter by saying, "I feel my own powers, and know what I am capable of, without priding myself too much on them, or yet seeking favour. I write to bear witness to truth,

and will never descend to flattery, which are too opposite ever to be reconciled."

To this representation either no answer, or an unsatisfactory one was returned; and Vouet and Le Mercier, encouraged by the evident coldness of the court, declared they would no longer work under his directions. The next step was to draw up a memorial against him, wherein they artfully insinuated, that the honour of the nation was compromised by the parsimony of his plans for the public buildings, thereby exposing their own interested views, as Poussin did not fail to point out in a letter to the minister, saying, "the calumnies of my enemies are pointed by their hopes of gain."

It is not surprising that these cabals should at length have caused some disgust on the part of M. de Noyers, and that this circumstance, joined to the irksomeness of

the petty tasks which were daily assigned him, should have determined Poussin to ask leave to return, at least for a time, to Rome, where he had left his wife, to whom he was much attached, and to whom he always expressed the utmost gratitude, and many friends, for whose society he could find but small compensation at Paris, surrounded as he was by those who, on many accounts, were his rivals. Accordingly, having been sent for by M. de Noyers to Fontainbleau, to restore some pictures of Primaticcio, which had suffered by time and * damp, "I took that opportunity," he writes, "to speak to him about my wish to go to Italy, to bring my wife to Paris; and having listened to the reasons which in-

* The work of Primaticcio, at Fontainbleau, which is praised by Evelyn, in his Diary, was the history of Ulysses. Evelyn also mentions a picture by Poussin, over a chimney-piece, in the Count de Liancour's palace, Rue du Seine. He praises it highly; but it seems uncertain whether it was painted at this period, or before he went to Rome. The subject is a satyr kneeling.

duced me to form that wish, with unspeakable kindness he acceded to it, on condition, however, that I should finish the pictures I have now in hand, and return to Paris in the Spring. I have hopes of setting out early in September."

While Poussin was engaged in the business for which he had gone to Paris, he was not unmindful of his Roman friends. By his letters to the Commander del Pozzo, we learn that he was employed by his friends of that family, and by some other persons in soliciting ecclesiastical and other favours from the court of France. * And in return, his interest with Cardinal Barberini was more than once employed in favour of his countrymen in Rome. He also obtained copies of several fine pictures belonging to the king of France, for the Commander del

* One of these was to obtain a licence to print an antiquarian work, by Angeloni.

Pozzo, in return for others, which that gentleman procured in Italy for Paris.

At length, the time so ardently wished for by Poussin, when he felt free to return to Rome, arrived. The last picture he painted in Paris, was that of "Time bringing Truth to light, and delivering her from the fiends Malice and Envy." It has been suggested, that by this picture he meant to allude to his own vexations at the court of France; it was done for Cardinal Richelieu, and is now in the Louvre. Possibly the allegory had nothing to do with his personal feelings, for in that age every thing was allegorized. Another picture, which he left in France, appears however, unquestionably to have had a reference to himself and his enemies. Among the decorations of the coved ceiling of the Louvre, Poussin had placed false bas-reliefs of the Labours of Hercules; and, besides the usual number, added an imaginary one, wherein he de-

stroys Folly, Ignorance, and Envy: these hateful personages are caricatures of Fouquieres, Le Mercier, and Vouet; and it is said, that the figure of Hercules bore a resemblance to Poussin himself. Fouquieres is Folly seated on an ass, from whose neck hangs a medal, with the initials J. F: Ignorance, as Le Mercier, is busy tearing up the works of Vitruvius; she holds a square and compasses in her hand. Envy is of course Vouet. This picture is in the possession of M. Dufourney, at Paris, who has preserved drawings of the series of the Labours of Hercules, the originals having been destroyed in cleaning and altering the ceiling. In some of the details of this caricature there is considerable humour, nor is it the only picture that shows Poussin to have been possessed of a great share of that quality. The death of Philemon, who, according to Aulus Gellius, expired of laughing at seeing an ass eat figs, is one of these; and in several of his Bacchanalian subjects, there are traits of

humour, which an ordinary painter could not have ventured upon with success.

Shortly after Poussin's departure from Paris, his patron, M. de Noyers, was banished from court; Cardinal Richelieu died soon after; and Louis XIII. only survived till the 14th of the May following, 1643. These circumstances suspended the works at the Louvre, until Cardinal Mazarin, having obtained the recall of M. de Noyers, they were resumed with fresh vigour; and Poussin was again invited to superintend them, or at least to finish the gallery.

But the pleasure with which he had returned to Rome, the delight of his friends at seeing him again among them, and the tranquil enjoyments of his domestic life, added to his experience of the disagreeable cabals of the court, rendered him averse to return, except on certain conditions. "I should only wish," he says, in

his answer, " to return to France on the terms of my first engagement, and not to finish the Louvre, for which I can send drawings from Rome. I will never go to Paris to be employed only as a private man, though my works should be covered with gold for it." This answer put an end to all further correspondence on the subject; but Louis XIV. continued * to give him the pension which his predecessor had granted.

His first object on returning to Rome was to fulfil the commission he had undertaken for his friends in Paris. M. de Chantelou's Sacraments; Rebecca at the Well, a picture which can

* The French academy of the fine arts, now established in the Villa Medici, at Rome, was founded by Louis XIV. It originally occupied a palace in the Corso. The particulars of the establishment, and the advantages it enjoys, are to be found in the first number of the London Magazine, and in the same paper there are some excellent remarks on the different modern schools of painting. — About the time of Poussin's declining to return to Paris, Louis XIV. stopped the works at the Louvre to build at Versailles.

never be too much praised for truth, grace, and beauty; and the Interment of Phocion, were among the first works he finished at that period. As he was now relieved from all anxiety concerning his pecuniary circumstances, his whole soul became more devoted than ever to his art. "As I grow older," he writes in a letter to a friend, "I feel myself more than ever inflamed with the desire of surpassing myself, and of reaching to the highest degree of perfection." It has been observed, that where a sound mind and body remained, painters have improved, even to extreme old age. That Raffaelle's last works should be his best is not wonderful, for he died at thirty-seven. But Titian improved to the last, and he died of the plague at ninety-nine. To the failure of Michael Angelo's sight we must attribute the inferiority of the Paoline to the Sistine Chapel. And if Guido's last pictures are worse than those painted earlier, his passion for gambling, which forced him

to hurry his work too much, may justly be said to have destroyed his talent.

From the time of Poussin's return from Paris, he spent most of his time in his painting room, and seldom admitted any visitors there. His friends, however, used to wait for him on the terrace of the Trinità de' Monti, where his house was situated, and where he took his morning and evening walk; and his biographers have represented him as an ancient philosopher surrounded by his disciples. In fact his hours of exercise were rendered more delightful by intimate conversation with the learned and the polite, who crowded round him from all parts of Rome, to admire that dignified simplicity of manner and conversation, which was a part of the antique purity of taste, which inspires his works, and regulated his whole life. Some of his sayings have been preserved. They are remarkable for good sense, and that kind of philosophy which is of most value in the conduct of life. He was asked one

day, what was the chief benefit he had derived from his extensive reading, and what he regarded as his best knowledge? "How to live well with all the world," was his answer.

One evening Cardinal Massimi having paid him a visit, staid with him till dark. Poussin, who had no footman, took a lamp himself to light his guest to his carriage, who said to him, "I am sorry for you, M. Poussin; you have no footman!" "and I," said Poussin, "am still more sorry for your Eminency, because you have so many!" A person of quality having shown him a picture of his own painting, Poussin said to him, "Ah, my lord, you only want a little poverty, to become a good painter." But these sentences and repartees, though they showed the readiness of his mind, were not, at least to many of his hearers, the most valuable parts of his conversation. His brother-in-law Gaspar, Claude Lorraine, Charles le Brun, and other painters

of eminence attended his walks, in order to gather from him just maxims of art, and to hear his counsels on the true method of seeing nature.

Of the two great landscape painters here named, it is difficult to say which is the most poetical. Both have looked into nature, and seen her truly, but differently; Gaspar Poussin, loves the landscape before the sun is up, or after he is set, or when heavy clouds only permit a bright beam to flash through his dark foliage; Claude must have sun, and light, and life. His mornings are fresh, yet sparkling; his day makes the shade of his trees necessary for the eye and the imagination, and we dread the moment when night must obscure his lovely evenings. From the Trinità de' Monti all Claude's effects, and many of his subjects, may be traced. From the little portico of his house, the view over the vale of the Tyber, the fine lines of the Vatican, the Monte Mario, and the Villa

Medici, which he has introduced in many of his pictures, are seen to peculiar advantage, both in the morning and evening effect. Gaspar's compositions are often drawn from the same source; but his lights and colours seem to be more taken from the massy walls and ruins of the city, where the Coliseum and the Palatine require shadow, approaching to darkness, to soften the red ruin into the verdant decorations with which time has adorned their venerable summits. The picturesque beauty of Rome was truly felt by these great painters, and, excepting the back grounds of Domenichino, and those of Nicholas Poussin, scarcely any other has done it justice.* The views of

* Of modern painters our own countrymen may, perhaps, rival these. Wilson painted views, and animated them by historic combinations and figures. Turner, before he ever saw Italy, seems, by the inspiration of genius, to have painted the colour of the Campagna; and among the artists resident in Rome, in 1819, none but the English seemed truly to feel the value of what surrounded them. The French, Germans, and Italians, made correct or imaginary views; but, excepting among the English, I never saw the poetry of Rome painted.

ruins and monuments by Piranesi and other artists, may give an idea of the grandeur even of the ruined city; but its colour, its trees, its wonderful distances, have never been truly felt but by the Poussins, Claude, and Domenichino.

Although Poussin valued his time and his liberty too much to take any pupil, from the moment of his return to Rome, he generously interested himself in the studies and the reputation of his young countryman, Charles le Brun. The following account of their first acquaintance, and of the benefits derived by Le Brun from the friendship of Poussin, is an extract from an original MS. of Claude Nivelon, and is too interesting to be altered or shortened.*

"The early productions of Le Brun were partly the cause which determined M. Seguier to procure him the means of

* *Description des Œuvres de M. le Brun*, dediée a LouisXIV. p. 10. bib. de M. Lami.

going to Italy, foreseeing that the king's bounty, and his own, would be more eminently displayed by his study and consideration of the fine objects of art in that country. He gave him a considerable pension; and his interest rendered every thing in Rome easy of access, by means of Cardinal Antonio, who, at his request, presented him to Pope Urban VIII., with a letter of introduction from the king. He recommended him also to the famous M. Poussin, who was returning to Rome, in 1643. They met at Lyons, and performed the rest of the journey together; which intercourse occasioned, on the one hand, great good-will towards M. Le Brun in M. Poussin; and, on the other, a respect and esteem in the young man, which he always preserved for M. Poussin, declaring often that he was obliged to him for having confirmed him in his most profound observations on art. His application improved him, in a short time, to such a degree, that he painted a picture

without the knowledge of any body, and which was exhibited, on a certain festival, as a novelty, to the Roman artists. It is true it was a French flame, no sparks of which had yet been seen. Every body at first thought it was a picture by M. Poussin, and he was accordingly congratulated upon it. Le Brun, having called on him that morning, on purpose, M. Poussin said to him, 'Several persons have been here to talk to me of a picture which they say I painted, but I know nothing about it; let us go and look at it together.' The surprise of M. Poussin was not small, not knowing either the author or the work, although in imitation of his own best manner; and he was, for a little while, secretly uneasy about the painter. M. Le Brun coming up to him, begged him to say what he really thought of it, for that he had done his best to imitate him in his fine style; which, as one may imagine, surprised him agreeably, and he undeceived nobody, though in a

place and at a time when his reputation seemed to be put in competition with that of so young a man. The picture, the subject of which is, Horatius Cocles at the Bridge, long passed at Paris for the work of Poussin." It is now in the gallery of Dulwich College.

Shortly after Poussin's return to Rome, M. de Chantelou having desired him to paint a companion to Raffaelle's Vision of Ezekiel, which he had just bought at Bologna, he produced the Ecstasy of St. Paul: a picture which the French think equal to that of Raffaelle, and quote the Cavaliere del Pozzo's opinion in support of theirs. That zealous friend of Poussin says, in a letter: — "The Ecstasy of St. Paul is not less esteemed than the Vision of Ezekiel. It is Poussin's masterpiece; and, on comparing the two, it is evident that France has her Raffaelle, as well as Italy." This criticism may be true, as far as it concerns the two pictures; but it must be remem-

bered, that Poussin was strongest in subjects of this kind, where Raffaelle was weakest. Strength, correctness, and expression are the qualities peculiar to Poussin, whose grace is often without beauty. Raffaelle is always full of beauty, with grace and expression ; his women and angels are a race apart ; and whether celestial visitants at the patriarch's gate, Psyche ascending to Olympus, or Saint Cecilia listening to the celestial choir, they are equally removed from common or vulgar association. Poussin's personages have always human alloy about them ; and it is absolutely necessary to produce the impression and the sympathy which it was his object to excite. Poussin himself, in writing to M. de Chantelou, in answer to his request to paint the picture in question, says : — " I fear that my trembling hand will fail me in a work which is to accompany Raffaelle ; and I can hardly resolve to set to work unless you promise that my picture shall serve as a covering

to that of Raffaelle." And, again, when he sent home the picture, in December, 1643, he wrote to M. de Chantelou:— "I entreat, as much to avoid calumny as the confusion I should feel if any one should see my picture hanging up as the companion to that of Raffaelle, that you would keep it apart, and at a distance from what would ruin it, and take from it the little beauty it may possess."

The year 1644 was chiefly employed upon the second series of the Sacraments: and never, perhaps, were the mysteries of religion set forth with greater dignity and solemnity than in these pictures. The mind of Poussin was truly devout, and he felt sincerely the importance of the subjects he painted. Hence the grave and expressive character of these pictures, particularly of the Extreme Unction, which was the first finished, and sent to Paris early in 1645, and was soon followed by the rest; of which it was observed, that

the Marriage was the most feeble, and gave occasion for the Parisian wits to say, that it was difficult to make a good matrimonial scheme, even in painting.

Early in 1647, the Finding of Moses *, painted for M. Pointel, reached Paris, where it met with such applause that M. de Chantelou expressed some jealousy on account of his own pictures; upon which Poussin wrote to him as follows:—

"If this picture has given you so much pleasure, it is not because I took more pains with it than with those I painted for you; but you must attribute it to the nature of the subject, which naturally adapts itself to happy composition. Nothing is so difficult as to form a right judgment in painting, especially if one does not unite

* Richardson saw this picture, early in the last century, at Paris. He says, that "it is in the best and genteelest style of the master." It is still in the Louvre in excellent preservation.

great theoretical knowledge to practice. One should therefore never judge hastily. You are not ignorant of one thing which a painter should observe in representing his subject; this is, that the Greeks, the inventors of the fine arts, discovered several modes by means of which they produced the marvellous effects of their works. I understand by the word *mode*, the reason, measure, or form which confines one within just bounds, and obliges one to work with a certain moderation and determined order, that one may give truth to the work.

"The modes of the ancients being composed of many parts, it must happen that from the varieties and differences of those parts there will result so many different modes; and that, from each of these, thus composed of divers parts put together in proportion, there proceeds a secret spring capable of exciting different passions in the soul. Hence the ancients attributed

to each of these modes a peculiar property, according to the nature of the effects they were capable of producing: as grave and serious to the Dorian: vehement passion to the Phrygian: to the Lydian every thing agreeable and amiable: to the Ionic every thing belonging to bacchanals, feasts, and dances. Thus in imitation of the poets, painters, and musicians of antiquity, I abide by this plan, which all painters ought to keep in view, that they may express passions conformable to the fiction, and excite corresponding emotions in the mind of the spectator."

The next year, 1648, the beautiful picture, before mentioned, of "Rebecca with Eliezer at the Well," was sent to enrich M. Pointel's collection. M. Pointel had seen a picture of Guido's, sent to Cardinal Mazarin from Rome, by the Abbé Gavot, representing the Virgin sitting, with a number of beautiful young girls around her, occupied in different employments.

He was so pleased with this subject, that he wrote to Poussin to paint something in the same taste, where a variety of beauty might be introduced, leaving the choice of the subject to him; and nothing can be happier than that he made. Rebecca and her companions give full scope for the painter to represent all the varieties of beauty; and in their drapery, and the landscape, he has exhibited all the elegance and antique decorum in which he was so eminently skilled. From the day on which this charming picture appeared in Paris, numerous amateurs offered great sums to M. Pointel to induce him to part with it; but he constantly refused them, saying, that he valued his friend's work too highly to deprive himself of it, even for a single day.

The same year Poussin painted the fine landscape in which the incident of Diogenes observing the young man drink from the hollow of his hand, is intro-

duced; it was done for M. Lauragne. Of this great painter's very numerous works, which are nearly five hundred in number, it would probably be impossible, and certainly unnecessary, to mark the succession. But, as he approached his end, his friends appear to have become very careful, to mark the date of his works. In 1650 he painted the picture which furnishes the subject of Fontenelle's dialogue between Poussin and Leonardo da Vinci. In it the different effects of terror, produced by the sight of a terrible object, and the hearing the sounds, and witnessing the gestures of fear, are dramatically exhibited. The hint of the subject is to be found in Apuleius, in his account of the effects of magic, as related to him by Aristomenes. The figures, however expressive, serve only to adorn an exquisite landscape, which was done for M. Pointel, after whose death it was successively purchased by M. Duplessis, Rambouillet, and M. Moreau.

Among the men of talents employed by Louis XIV. to decorate his royal palaces, was the landscape gardener, Le Notre, who used the fortune he had acquired by his own merits, in encouraging and rewarding those of his contemporary artists. He possessed considerable talents for painting, himself, and was not slow to appreciate and encourage those of Poussin, who, in 1653, painted for him "the Woman taken in Adultery;" which Richardson, when he saw it in Paris, admired extremely for its fine colouring. It has been remarked, however, that, in common with many of his later pictures, it has the great fault that its figures are too short. The same year, 1653, "the Adoration of the Wise Men" was painted for M. de Mauroy, minister of finance.

We have already mentioned that M. Stella, Poussin's intimate friend, succeeded him as first painter to the king of France. In consequence of that appoint-

ment, he was, in 1644, honoured with the cross of St. Michael. Poussin had painted several pictures for him before that period, and among others Rinaldo and Armida, from Tasso, which is not one of his happiest productions. But for this failure he made ample amends, by painting for him, in 1655, the Exposure of Moses, one of the finest landscapes he ever composed. He had painted nearly about the same time, for the same gentleman, Moses striking the Rock, a subject which he repeated three times: once was for M. Gilier; but, as usual with him, he treated it quite differently each time.

Stella having communicated to him some criticisms on this picture*, particularly on account of the depth of the basin into which the water falls, Poussin wrote him the following answer:—"There is no difficulty here; I am not sorry it should

* There are some flimsy criticisms on it to be found in Walpole's Sermon on Painting.

be known that I do nothing by chance, and that I understand perfectly what a painter is permitted to do with the subjects he has to represent, which may be taken and understood, either as they have been, as they are, or as they will be. The local disposition of the miracle must have been such as I have represented; because, otherwise, the water could neither have been collected, nor used to supply the wants of so great a multitude of people, but would have been dispersed on all sides. If, at the creation of the world, the earth had received one uniform figure, and the water had found neither channels nor hollows, the surface would have been covered with it, and useless to the animals; but, from the beginning, God disposed all things in order, and with relation to the end for which he formed his work. Therefore, at such a remarkable event as that of the striking the rock, we may well believe that a corresponding miracle in the disposition of the ground took place. How-

ever, as it is not easy for every one to judge of works of art, one should be very careful not to decide hastily."

Conformably to this opinion, Poussin has treated the ground and local circumstances of all the four pictures in the same manner. One of these, which had been in the Orleans collection, is now in the Stafford Gallery, and is, perhaps, the finest of all, though less expressive of the dire thirst of the people than two of the others; the fourth, which is now in a private collection in Paris, appears, from the outline printed by Landon, to have less merit than any of the rest.

The genius of Poussin seems to have gained vigour with age. Nearly his last works, which were begun in 1660, and sent to Paris 1664, were the four pictures allegorical of the seasons, which he painted for the Duc de Richelieu. He chose the terrestrial paradise, in all the freshness of creation, to designate spring. The

beautiful story of Boaz and Ruth formed the subject of summer. Autumn was aptly pictured, in the two Israelites bearing the bunch of grapes from the Promised Land. But the master-piece was Winter, represented in the Deluge. This picture has been, perhaps, the most praised of all Poussin's works. A narrow space, and a very few persons have sufficed him for this powerful representation of that great catastrophe. The sun's disk is darkened with clouds; the lightning shoots in forked flashes through the air; nothing but the roofs of the highest houses are visible above the distant water upon which the Ark floats, on a level with the highest mountains. Nearer, where the waters, pent in by rocks, form a cataract, a boat is forced down the fall, and the wretches who had sought safety in it are perishing: but the most pathetic incident is brought close to the spectator. A mother in a boat is holding up her infant to its father, who, though upon a

high rock, is evidently not out of reach of the water, and it is only protracting life a very little. One or two figures are seen above the surface of the water, endeavouring to escape; the domestic animals are mingled with their owners; and an enormous serpent, which seems to seek shelter on the highest mountains, has been considered as emblematical of the wickedness that drew down the fierce chastisement upon man.

The dark and lurid colour of this picture seems to correspond with the scene; and the misty air has a troublous grandeur, in the picture in the Louvre, which is quite lost in the copy in Cardinal Fesche's collection, where it is merely a leaden sky.

In the Manuel du Museum François, the Deluge is called the finest that the hand of man has produced; and in this superlative praise, one critic has followed another, till it is become a kind of heresy to dispute

its justice. Nevertheless, although the conception be grand, and the two principal incidents not unworthy of Poussin, the effect of the whole picture is unpleasant. The usual objection to any representation of the deluge is not overcome in this. It is only the inundation of a valley, terrible indeed, but without the assistance of the Ark in the background, it might pass for an ordinary accident; the rocks in the fore-ground are such as we daily see at no great elevation, and the very circumstance of the cataract, though fine in itself, shuts out the idea of the deluge, where all the waters must have been level. Nevertheless, the picture has great power, and the defect is in the subject, not in the painter. Some subjects cannot be painted. Not even Michael Angelo could express, — "And God said, let there be light, and there was light." And though the figure of the Christ, in his LastJudgment, be one before which it seems as if no guilty man

could stand erect. Yet that great picture, on the whole, must, as the visible day of account to all, be considered a failure, notwithstanding that the groupes, of which it is composed, are individually of almost super-human grandeur.

The long and honourable race of Poussin was now nearly run. Early in the following year, 1665, he was slightly affected by palsy, and the only picture of figures that he painted afterwards was the Samaritan Woman at the Well, which he sent to M. de Chantelou, with a note, in which he says, — "This is my last work; I have already one foot in the grave." Shortly afterwards he wrote the following letter to M. Felibien. "I could not answer the letter which your brother, M. le Prieur de St. Clementin, forwarded to me, a few days after his arrival in this city, sooner, my usual infirmities being increased by a very troublesome cold, which continues and annoys me very much. I

must now thank you not only for your remembrance, but for the kindness you have done me, by not reminding the prince of the wish he once expressed to possess some of my works. It is too late for him to be well served; I am become too infirm, and the palsy hinders me in working, so that I have given up the pencil for some time, and think only of preparing for death, which I feel bodily upon me. It is all over with me." He ends this letter with a critique upon a new book upon painting. "We have N.," he observes, "who writes upon the lives and works of modern painters. His style is bombastic, without spirit and without science. He handles painting like a man who has neither practice nor theory: several who have dared to make the same attempt have been rewarded, as they deserve, by ridicule," &c.

Excepting Vasari, no foreign painter has found time to write the lives of his

brother artists; and it is an office which may be as well performed by others: but the criticism and theory of painting have always been best treated by those who united practice to their theory; and this consideration renders it matter of regret that Poussin has written so little. The admirers of Raffaelle Mengs, jealous of Poussin's title of "the Painter of Philosophers," conferred on him the antithetical one of "the Philosopher of Painters;" and it cannot be denied that his writings and his pictures are learned. Yet he is a remarkable instance of the folly of learned quackery: his reputation having now sunk as much below his deserts, as it was once raised above them. In one of his celebrated works, the ceiling of the banquetting room at the Villa Albani, the theme of Winkelman's praises, and of the admiration of his generation, he has lavished all his learning. From the Garland of Apollo, to the great ultra-marine globe to which Urania is *not* looking, every thing has authority; yet who ever

looked at the picture without disappointment; or, in gazing at it, who ever felt either the glow of admiration, or that forgetfulness of the author, in the excellencies of his work, which the good pictures of Italy so often inspire? How different are the pictures, and writings on painting, of English painters! The feeling and beauty of Reynolds's pictures veil whatever defects he may be charged with. The grace and the nature of his figures win the spectator, and, in excusing the faults of any one of his pictures, he feels as if taking the part of a favourite or friend, whose very failures are amiable. He saw nature in her sweetest, kindest, and most careless moments; but Mengs never looked at her, but through the perspective of art. Nor are their writings less different than their painting. Mengs fettered his reason by rules, and subjected the philosophy of art to art itself. Reynolds's expansive mind made rules

subservient to reason, and proved that they could be best adopted, and most skilfully used by those who make them the means, not the principles, of action. Mengs's works will seldom be read but by artists. The lectures of Reynolds are as comprehensive as the mind of man, and will be relished by all; for they embrace and generalise every subject upon which art may exercise itself, either for the delight or the improvement of mankind.

The lectures of Fuseli and Opie, the works of Northcote, those of Shee, and some others, might be quoted for learning, good sense, and knowledge of painting; but they have not that philosophical *breadth*, if I may borrow a term of art, which makes the discourses of Reynolds equally applicable to every art, and every science, in which taste is concerned, or whose object is to give refined and intellectual pleasure.

Had Poussin written on art, his works, though they might have partaken of the stiffness of Mengs, would, if we may judge by his pictures, have conformed with the principles of Reynolds. Idolater as he was of ancient art, he never lost sight of nature; and even when he took his general forms and attitudes from the antique, his details were finished from the life.

The last letter he ever wrote contains some hints upon the general principles of art; and it is given here not only as a proof how well his practice accorded with his theory, but of the modesty with which he estimated himself.

Poussin to M. de Chantelou.

" I must, at length, endeavour to awake after my long silence. I must raise my voice while my pulse still faintly beats. I have had full leisure to read and to weigh your book upon the perfect idea of painting, which has been a sweet solace

to my afflicted mind. I rejoice that you are the first Frenchman to open the eyes of those who see only through the medium of others, and suffer themselves to be led astray after the crowd. Now you have warmed and softened a metal, hitherto stiff and difficult to handle, so that henceforth others may be found, who, by imitating you, will give us something useful upon painting. After having considered the distribution that the Sieur François Junius makes of the parts of this noble art, I venture briefly to write down here what I have learned from him. It is necessary, first, to know what the nature of imitation is, and to define it.

" DEFINITION.

" Painting is an imitation by means of lines and colours, on some superficies, of every thing that can be seen under the sun ; its end is to please.

" *Principles that every man capable of*

reasoning may learn: — There can be nothing represented without light,
without form,
without colour,
without distance,
without an instrument, or medium.

" *Things which are not to be learned, and which make an essential part of painting:*

" First, the subject must be noble. It should have received no quality from the mere workman; and to allow scope to the painter to display his powers, he should choose it capable of receiving the most excellent form. He must begin by composition, then ornament, propriety, beauty, grace, vivacity, costume, probability, and judgment, in each and all. These last belong solely to the painter, and cannot be taught. They are the golden bough of Virgil, which no man can find or gather if his fate do not lead him to it. These nine parts deserve, on several accounts, to

be treated by some good and learned author.

" I beg you will consider this slight sketch, and tell me unceremoniously what you think of it. I know that you are not only skilful in keeping up the flame in a lamp, but that you can feed it with the best oil. I would say more; but now, when I apply my head attentively to any serious matter, I am the worse for it. For the rest, I blush to see myself placed in a rank with men whose merit and virtue are as much above mine as the planet Saturn is above ours. It is a compliment for which I am indebted to your friendship," &c.

The affliction of mind, which he speaks of in the beginning of this letter, was occasioned by the death of his wife, which happened early in the year 1665, the last of his own life. He had already become paralytic himself, and the loss of one who had so long been his companion and

friend, seems to have accelerated his death. When he wrote to M. de Chantelou, to apprise him of his great loss, he was so feeble that it took him ten days to write his letter. He was so sensible of his approaching end, that he recommended his family affairs, and particularly those concerning his relations at Andelys*, to that excellent friend's care, after which he wrote no more himself, excepting the letter above quoted. His brother-in-law, John Dughet, wrote for him, and he soon became too helpless to leave the house. By a letter from M. Dughet to M. de Chantelou, dated 28th of October, we learn that a painful abscess and an inflammation of the bowels were added to his other maladies. His understanding, however, continued unimpaired until the 19th of November, when he expired about mid-day, in the seventy-second

* The family of his sister, who had married a man of that town named Le Tellier. Her son, John Le Tellier, had a considerable talent for painting, and some of his altar-pieces in the churches, in that part of Normandy, possess merit.

year of his age. He had made his will about two months before, forbidding any unnecessary expense at his funeral, and disposing of his property, which amounted to about fifty thousand livres, as follows: One thousand crowns to the relations of his wife, one thousand to his niece, Frances Le Tellier, residing at Andelys, and appointing his nephew, Jean Le Tellier, residuary legatee.

Never, perhaps, was a private man more deeply regretted than Nicholas Poussin. The tempered vivacity of his conversation, the affectionate regard with which he treated his friends and relations, the modesty which prevented his giving offence, and the easy unostentatious manner in which he loved to discourse upon his art, rendered his society invaluable, both as a man and a painter. His death caused a general sensation in Rome, his adopted country. All the friends of art assembled to accompany his remains to the Church of San Lorenzo *in Lucina*, where

he was buried *, and where there are two Latin inscriptions in his honour.

Some years afterwards the Chevalier d'Agincourt placed a marble bust, with a suitable inscription, in honour of Poussin, in which he is called the Painter of Philosophers, in the Pantheon. Another is with great propriety placed as a companion to that of Raffaelle, in the vestibule of the French Academy of Fine Arts at Rome, and of late years an excellent statue of Poussin was executed by a French sculptor.

In his person Poussin was tall and well proportioned, and of a good constitution. His complexion was olive, his hair

* In the gallery of the Louvre (1820), there is a pleasing little picture, by Bergeret, representing the funeral service of Poussin. Cardinal Massimi, Gaspar Poussin, and one of his sisters, Lanfranc, Algarde, St. Nicaise, and one or two more of Poussin's most intimate friends, are represented surrounding the bier on which the body is half exposed, according to the Italian manner of performing funerals.

black, but it became very grey towards the end of his life; his eyes were blue, his nose rather long, his forehead large, and his look both dignified and modest.

There is a portrait of him in the gallery of the Louvre, probably that which he painted for M. de Chantelou, who had often entreated to have it. Poussin told him he did not know an artist in Rome capable of doing it well, and, therefore, on his friend repeating his request, he undertook it himself, though it cost him some trouble, as it was twenty-eight years since he had done such a thing. A picture like that in the Louvre, with some little difference in the back-ground, is in the Rospigliosi Palace at Rome, and is probably an original, as the family of Rospigliosi were among his friends and patrons.

After the few first years of his residence in Rome, and still more after his return from Paris, Poussin might have commanded any fortune; but his desires

were very moderate, and after he had fixed the price of his pictures, which he rather under-valued, he specified the sum on the back of the piece: if after that any one sent him more than the price fixed, he returned the money. He had also a habit of accompanying each picture, when he sent it home, by a letter, explaining his reasons for the particular manner in which he had treated the subject; thus answering beforehand whatever criticism it might meet with.

The character of Poussin as a painter cannot be better given than in the words of Reynolds, who, after characterising the style of Reubens, says, "Opposed to this florid, careless, loose, and inaccurate style, that of the simple, careful, pure, and correct style of Poussin seems to be a complete contrast. Yet, however opposite their characters, in one thing they agreed; both of them always preserving a perfect correspondence between all the parts of

their respective manners; insomuch that it may be doubted whether any alteration of what is considered defective in either, would not destroy the effect of the whole.

"Poussin lived and conversed with the ancient statues so long, that he may be said to have been better acquainted with them than with the people about him. I have often thought that he carried his veneration for them so far, as to wish to give his works the air of ancient paintings. It is certain he copied some of the antique paintings, particularly the Marriage in the Aldobrandini Palace at *Rome, which I believe to be the best relique of those remote ages that has yet been found.

"No works of any modern have so much the air of antique painting, as those of Poussin. His best performances have a remarkable dryness of manner, which, though by no means to be recommended

* Now in the Vatican.

for imitation, yet seems perfectly correspondent to that ancient simplicity which distinguishes his style. Like Polidoro, he studied the ancients so much, that he acquired a habit of thinking in their way, and seemed to know perfectly the actions and gestures they would use on every occasion.

" Poussin, in the latter part of his life, changed from his dry manner to one much softer and richer, where there is a greater union between the figures and ground; as in the Seven Sacraments, in the Duke of Orleans's collection; but neither these, nor any of his other pictures in this manner, are at all comparable to many in his dry manner, which we have in England.

" The favourite subjects of Poussin were ancient fables; and no painter was ever better qualified to paint such subjects, not only from his being eminently

skilled in the knowledge of the ceremonies, customs, and habits of the ancients, but from his being so well acquainted with the different characters which those who invented them gave to their allegorical figures.

" Though Reubens has shewn great fancy in his Satyrs, Silenuses, and Fauns; yet they are not that distinct separate class of beings, which is carefully exhibited by the ancients, and by Poussin. Certainly, when such objects of antiquity are represented, nothing in the picture ought to remind us of modern times. The mind is thrown back into antiquity, and nothing ought to be introduced that may tend to awaken us from the illusion.

" Poussin seemed to think that the style and the language in which such stories are told, is not the worse for preserving some relish of the old way of painting, which seemed to give a general

air of uniformity to the whole; so that the mind was thrown back into antiquity, not only by the subject, but the execution.

"If Poussin, in imitation of the ancients, represents Apollo driving his chariot out of the sea, by way of representing the sun rising; if he personifies lakes and rivers, it is nowise offensive in him, but seems perfectly of a piece with the general air of the picture. On the contrary, if the figures which people his pictures had a modern air or countenance, if they appeared like our countrymen, if the draperies were like cloth or silk of our manufacture, if the landscape had the appearance of a modern view, how ridiculous would Apollo appear instead of the sun; an old man, or a nymph, with an urn, to represent a river or a lake."

Poussin is, in the strict sense of the word, an historical painter. Michael An-

gelo, is too intent on the sublime, too much occupied with the effect of the whole, to tell a common history. His conceptions are epic, and his persons, and his colours, have as little to do with ordinary life, as the violent action of his actors have resemblance to the usually indolent state of ordinary men. Raffaelle's figures interest so much in themselves, that they make us forget that they are only part of a history. We follow them eagerly, as we do the personages of a drama; we grieve, we hope, we despair, and we rejoice with them. Poussin's figures, on the contrary, tell their story; we feel not the intimate acquaintance with themselves, that we do with the creations of Raffaelle. His Cicero would thunder in the forum, and dissipate a conspiracy, and we should take leave of him with respect at the end of the scene; but with Raffaelle's we should feel in haste to quit the tumult, and retire with him to his Tusculum, and learn to love

the virtues, and almost to cherish the weaknesses of such a man.

Poussin has shown that grace and expression may be independent on what is commonly called beauty. His women have none of that soft, easy, and attractive air, which many other painters have found the secret of imparting, not only to their Venuses and Graces, but to their Madonnas and Saints. His beauties are austere and dignified. Minerva and the Muses appear to have been his models, rather than the inhabitants of Mount Cithæron. Hence subjects of action are more suited to him than those of repose. His Holy Families are far below his other pictures, for that reason ; however learnedly he may have disposed the figures, however beautifully the children may be drawn, (and in drawing children he has been surpassed by few ;) however exquisite the scenery in which he has placed his groupe, the want of that delicate feminine, lovely,

yet chaste beauty in the Virgin, makes us turn away, with cold approbation at most.

In such subjects, too, the defective colouring, and the neglect of chiaroscuro, are much more apparent than in others. The little character of the subject itself, the innumerable pictures of the same, which have driven the nomenclators of pictures to designate them by the names of some accidental circumstance, such as the chair *, the bowl, &c. are such disadvantages, that it requires every thing that art and nature can do to make a new "Holy Family" interesting; and when any of the great resources of painting are wanting, the picture must suffer accordingly.

It is different in a pure history: the persons are there to tell the story, and we more willingly excuse bad or harsh colour, or a scattered light, provided it does not

* Raffaelle's beautiful Madonna della Seggiola, in the Pitti Palace, and Correggio's Madonna della Scudella, &c.

lead to confusion. Where, as in most of Poussin's best histories, the figures are arranged as in a bas-relief, the light and shadow would naturally fall as he has usually managed it; and it accords well with the character of his composition. This arrangement was certainly his choice: he was sparing of his figures, and used to say, that one figure too much spoiled a picture. Hence he would not introduce persons not absolutely necessary to the action, for the sake of giving roundness to a groupe, or of extending or concentrating a mass of light. He intended his personages to tell their story, and to do nothing else; and he has succeeded beyond any other painter in doing this. The eye may not always be satisfied, but Poussin can always afford to appeal to the understanding, which will not fail to pronounce in his favour.

As the end of painting, however, is to please, it may be a question whether this

great painter has not carried his attention to expression, which was his principal end, too far. In one or two instances has he not excited disgust on the first sight of the picture? and does it not require an effort of the mind to bring it back to the contemplation of the excellencies that are to be found in it? These are his defects, — defects that every one may detect, and about which the least knowing in art will talk the most. His merits, on the other hand, being difficult in the attainment, and rare in the possession, are not so readily acknowledged. No man perhaps ever equalled him in the choice of subjects, or in the happiest moment in which to seize his history; as, in the Saving of Pyrrhus. The rebels have just reached the party, and are seen fighting with the guards of the young Prince; the Megarians, on the other side of the river, beckoning, show that there is a probability of safety; but there is still enough of uncertainty to give interest

and action to the piece. None better than Poussin knew how to excite the passions and affections. The Murder of the Innocents, though it affords an example of his having done too much, is also an instance of his power over the heart, and how well he knew to unlock the springs "that tie the hidden soul" of sympathy. And there was never moral tale or fable that spoke more to the mind than his picture of the Arcadian Shepherds.

These qualities belong to his understanding, and would have been the same with little or no learning. But the greater part of his pictures are such as it required, not only taste and understanding, but learning in its various branches, particularly a thorough acquaintance with history, poetry, and antiquity, to produce. Whether his subject be Jewish, Egyptian, Greek, or Roman, he knew the habits, and understood the man-

ners that should characterise each people. The Rape of the Sabines, the Coriolanus, in short, there is hardly one of his pictures that may not be quoted as an example of this excellence. In subjects of ancient fable, it is needless to say more, after what has been already quoted from Reynolds. And of his "landscape," Lanzi says, "I do not mean to exaggerate, when I say, that the Caracci improved the art of landscape-painting, and Poussin brought it to perfection." He applied himself particularly to give truth to his scenery: his trees, his rocks, his skies, have all nature in them, nature in her truest and most beautiful form. And his landscapes are peopled with graceful and appropriate figures, so that the inspirations of the ancient pastoral poets seem to have descended upon him; and we may often fancy that we see in "Tempe's vales her native maids," or the Brides of Albano, approaching the temple of Hippolytus, in the groves

of Aricia, to consecrate their locks, in the presence of Diana, on the altar of her favourite.

There is little danger, in this country, that any artist should fall into the defects of Poussin. The national taste is directed towards a more splendid style. Reubens has more admirers, and might have more followers here, than Poussin; but our young artists would be no losers if they were to follow Poussin's example in the diligence with which he sought after what he wished to gain. Let their ambition be to paint splendid pictures, and on a gigantic scale: but will they be the worse for correctness, for learning, for expression? "There is no royal road to painting;" and it must be confessed, that the path Poussin pursued was steep and rocky; but then he attained the vantage-ground he aimed at, and what a wide expanse it opened to him! Whatever there may be in his style to avoid, he is to be followed in the

diligence and method of his studies. Lanzi calls him the perfect model for one who would study in Rome. His passion for the antique, indeed, perhaps induced him to neglect the living model too often; but that is not the fault of indolence, and if to his accurate drawings, and measurements * and models after the best statues, he had added half as much practice from nature in his figures as in his landscapes, he might have been perhaps a perfect painter.

One thing may be observed, with regard to the consequences of studying painting exclusively in Rome. Form and expression become the painter's whole ideal world. The great masters there are not great for their colour or their chiaroscuro; and an artist, who is forming himself, would do well to see other schools and

* This measurement of the statue once called the Antinous, and since various names, has been published, and may be considered as correct and useful.

other habits before he finally resolves where to fix the point at which he aims. At Venice, Poussin would have been a colourist. He might not probably have been the better for the change; but unless a very strong feeling of preference for, or powers adapted to, such a style as Poussin's, determine the artist, there can be no doubt but the English student would please his countrymen better, if he brought home more from Venice than from Rome.

This imperfect sketch of the life, character, and studies of Poussin, is humbly offered to the English artists by a lover of art, who has not the slightest pretension to connoisseurship, but who has ventured to say what appears, to an unprejudiced person, to be the truth, in hopes that some benefit may be derived from it as truth, if it may not aspire to excite any great interest on other grounds.

END OF THE LIFE.

TWO DIALOGUES

BY FENELON.

DESCRIPTIVE OF TWO OF POUSSIN'S PICTURES.

DIALOGUES OF THE DEAD.

PARRHASIUS *and* POUSSIN.

Parr. IT is now a good while since we were taught to expect your arrival: you must have been pretty old when you died.

Pouss. Yes; and I continued to paint to a good old age.

Parr. Here they have prepared rather an honourable place for you, at the head of the French painters. If they had put you among the Italians, you would have been in better company. But those painters, that Vassari boasts of every day, would have quarrelled with you for ever. There are the two schools of Lombardy and Florence, without mentioning

that afterwards formed at Rome. All these fellows are continually plaguing us with their jealousy. They had taken Apelles, Zeuxis, and me for judges; but we should have had more to do to make them agree than the whole business of Minos, Æacus, and Rhadamanthus. They are even jealous of the ancients, and dare to compare themselves with us: their vanity is insupportable.

Pouss. No comparison should be drawn, because none of your works remain to be judged of; and I fancy you do nothing of the kind on the shores of Styx. It is rather too dark here for good colouring, perspective, and gradation of light. A picture painted here could be nothing but a night-piece; all would be dull. But to return to the ancients, I acknowledge that the general prejudice is in your favour. There is reason to think that your art, which is of the same nature as sculpture, had been carried to the same degree of perfection and that your pic-

tures equalled the statues of Praxiteles, of Scopas, and of Phidias; but none of your works have come down to us, and we cannot therefore compare them. Thus you are beyond our aim, and you keep us at a respectful distance. One thing is very true, — that we modern painters owe our best works to the antique models that we have studied in bas-reliefs. These bas-reliefs, though they belong to sculpture, give a good insight as to the taste of painting in your time. They are half pictures.

Parr. I am delighted to find a modern painter so just and so modest. You feel that when Zeuxis painted grapes which deceived birds, nature must have been well imitated to deceive nature * herself. When I afterwards painted the curtain, which deceived the learned eye of the great

* It is scarcely necessary to point out the fallacy of this test of painting, as applied to the higher branches of art. At that rate, the Newfoundland dog who attempted to leap into the sea in the Panorama, would furnish an argument for setting Mr. Barker above Raffaelle, and his beautiful deceptive landscapes above the Stanze of the Vatican or the cartoons.

Zeuxis, he confessed himself overcome. See to what a length we carried the charming deception. No, no; it is not for nothing that we have been praised for centuries. But tell me something about your own works. Phocion heard here that you had painted some fine pictures, in which he is complimented. He was very much pleased to hear it. Is it true?

Pouss. Certainly, I represented two slaves carrying his body out of Athens. They both appeared affected, but the two griefs were alike in nothing. The first slave is old; he is wrapped in neglected drapery; the naked arms and legs show a strong muscular man; his colour marks a body inured to labour. The other is young, clad in a tunic with graceful folds: the two attitudes are different, though the action be the same, and the air of their heads very different, though both of a servile cast.

Parr. Well; art imitates nature well only when it catches the infinite variety of her works. But the dead man —

Pouss. The dead man is concealed under a confused drapery that enwraps him, and this drapery is poor and negligent. In this funeral all is calculated to excite grief and pity.

Parr. Then the dead body is not seen?

Pouss. Under the confused drapery one cannot fail to remark the form of the head and body. As to the legs, they are uncovered, and in them is seen not only the livid colour of the flesh, but the stiffness and heaviness of the worn-out dead limbs. The two slaves carry the body along a high road, and pass by great square-hewn stones; some of which are raised in regular order above the others, so that they appear to be the ruins of some majestic building. The road is beaten and sandy.

Parr. What have you placed on the two sides of your picture, to accompany your principal figures?

Pouss. On the right are a few trees, whose bark is rugged and knotty. They

have but few branches, and the pale foliage is insensibly lost in the dull blue of the sky; behind their tall trunks the city of Athens is seen.

Parr. You must have a well-marked contrast on the left hand.

Pouss. It is this: a rugged country — where you see hollows in very strong shadow, and very bright points of rocks. In one place a few very wild bushes; a little above, a road leading to a dark thick wood, and a very clear sky gives still more effect to the dull green.

Parr. Well, that is good; I see that you are acquainted with the grand art in colouring, to strengthen one by placing it near its opposite.

Pouss. Beyond the rugged ground there is a fresh young green-sward. There a shepherd, leaning on his crook, is busy looking at his flock, white as snow, which is wandering and feeding in a meadow. The shepherd's dog is lying asleep behind him. On this plain there is another road,

along which a waggon, drawn by oxen, is passing. You are struck at once with the weight and strength of these animals, whose necks are bent to the ground, and who move slowly along. A rustic is before the waggon, and behind is a woman, who appears to be the faithful companion of the simple countryman. Two other women in veils are in the waggon.

Parr. Nothing gives more pleasure than these rural pictures; we owe them to the poets; they began to give the simple artless graces of nature in their verses; we have followed them. The ornaments of a country where nature is in beauty, present more imagery than all the magnificence that art has been able to invent.

Pouss. To the right on this road, on a roan horse, there is a rider, wrapped in a red cloak: both the man and horse lean forward; they seem to start off with increased speed; the maner of the horse, the hair of the man, his cloak, all are flowing, and blown back by the wind.

Parr. Those who only understand the painting of graceful figures have attained but to the middle style. Action and motion must be given, figures must be animated, and the passions of the soul expressed; I see you have entered well into the spirit of the ancients.

Pouss. A little more forward, turf appears on a sandy ground, and on the grass are three figures. One is standing in a white robe, with ample flowing folds. The two others are sitting by on the waterside; one of them is playing on a lyre. Beyond the turf there is a square building ornamented with bas-reliefs and festoons in a good style of simple yet noble architecture. It is doubtless the tomb of some citizen who has died with less virtue, but more riches, than Phocion.

Parr. I do not forget that you have talked to me of the water. — Is it the Athenian river called Ilissus?

Pouss. Yes: it appears in two places; by the tomb the water is pure and clear;

the serene sky reflected in it renders it yet more beautiful; young willows and other tender shrubs, whose freshness delights the eye, grow on the bank.

Parr. So far I have nothing to wish. But you have still a great and difficult object to set before me; there I fear for you.

Pouss. What?

Parr. The city.—There you must shew yourself acquainted with history, costume, and architecture.

Pouss. I painted the great city of Athens, on the declivity of a long hill, to display it better. The buildings rise by degrees, in a natural amphitheatre. The city does not appear large at first sight: near the spectator but a small portion is seen; but the back-ground, as it goes off, shews a great extent of building.

Parr. Have you avoided confusion?

Pouss. I have avoided both confusion and symmetry; I made a number of irregular buildings; they nevertheless make

an agreeable groupe, where every thing takes its most natural place. All is comprehended and distinguished at once; all unites and makes a whole; so there is apparent confusion, but real order when looked into.

Parr. Have you not brought forward any principal building?

Pouss. Yes, two great temples. Each has a large enclosure, as it should have, where the body of the temple is distinguished from the surrounding buildings. The temple to the right has a portico, adorned with four large columns of the Corinthian order, a pediment, and statues. Round this temple garlands are hanging. It is a solemnity which I wished to represent with historic truth. While Phocion was carrying out of the town to the funeral pile, the people celebrated a feast with pomp and joy round the temple. Although the figures are far off, one may easily see their acts of devotional joy in honour of the gods. Behind the temple

appears a large high tower ; on the top of which is the statue of some divinity : this however appears like a great column.

Parr. Whence did you take the idea?

Pouss. I don't remember ; but certainly from the antique, for I never took the liberty of giving the ancients any thing that was not taken from their own monuments. There is also an obelisk near the tower.

Parr. And the other temple, — have you nothing to say about it?

Pouss. The other temple is a round edifice supported by columns : the architecture is singular and majestic. In the enclosure are several large buildings with pediments : a few trees partly conceal it. I wished to mark a sacred grove.

Parr. Let us come to the body of the town.

Pouss. I thought I ought to mark the various times of the republic of Athens ; its first simplicity, even towards the heroic ages, and its magnificence in the times

when the arts flourished. Therefore I made a good many round or square edifices, with regular architecture, and also several marking a rude and warlike age: in these all is irregular; towers, battlements, high walls, and small, simple, unequal buildings. One thing renders the town agreeable; it is, that there is every where a mixture of large buildings and trees. I thought it necessary to have some green to represent the sacred groves belonging to the temples, and the trees of the Gymnasia, and other public places. I have every where endeavoured to avoid buildings like those of my own time and country, in order to give to antiquity a distinguished character.

Parr. All this is judiciously observed. But I do not see the Acropolis: did you forget it? it would be a pity.

Pouss. I took care not to do that; it is behind the town, on the top of the mountain that commands the declivity; at its foot are huge buildings, fortified by

towers. The mountain is covered with an agreeable verdure. The citadel itself appears to be a large enclosure, with an old tower, which shoots up to the clouds. You will remark that the city, which slopes to the left, recedes insensibly, and loses itself between a very dark grove, of which I spoke before; and a little clump of trees, of a brown, deep green on the bank of the river.

Parr. I am not yet satisfied: what did you put behind the town?

Pouss. A distance of wild and sharp mountains. One immediately behind the temple, and the joyous solemnity I spoke of, is a bare and frightful rock. I I thought I ought to make the immediate neighbourhood of the city cultivated and agreeable, as that of great towns always is. But I gave a wilder beauty to the distance, in conformity with history, which represents Attica as a rude and sterile country.

Parr. I own that my curiosity is fully

satisfied; and I should be jealous for the glory of the ancients if one could be so of a man who has imitated them so modestly.

Pouss. Remember, at least, that if I have talked long about my own work, I only did it because I would not refuse you any thing, and that I might submit to your judgment.

Parr. After so many centuries you have done more honour to Phocion than his country would have done, on the day of his death, by a sumptuous funeral. But let us go into this neighbouring grove, where he is with Timoleon and Aristides, that we may carry him the agreeable tidings.

LEONARDO DA VINCI *and* POUSSIN.

Leo. Your conversation with Parrhasius, makes some noise in this lower world. I am assured that he is prejudiced in your favour, and that he places

you above all the Italian painters; but we will never suffer it.

Pouss. Do you think it so easy to prejudice him? You do not do him justice; you do not do yourself justice; and you do me too much honour.

Leo. But he tells me he knows of nothing so fine as the picture you described to him. Why offend so many great men to praise one who ——

Pouss. But why do you take offence at the praises of others? Parrhasius made no comparisons; why are you vexed?

Leo. Yes, indeed! a little French painter, who was forced to leave his own country, to go and labour for bread at Rome!

Pouss. Ho! since you take it thus, you shall not have the last word. Well, 'tis true I left France to go and live at Rome, where I studied the antique models, and where painting was held in greater estimation than in my own country. But, in short, although a fo-

reigner, I was admired in Rome. And you, who were an Italian, were you not obliged to leave your country, although painting was so honoured there, and go and die at the court of Francis I.?

Leo. I should like to examine one of your pictures by the rules of painting, which I explained in my books. One might find as many faults as strokes.

Pouss. I consent: — I can believe that I am not so great a painter as you; but I am less jealous of my works. I will display the whole composition of one of my pictures: if you see faults in it, I will frankly avow them; if you approve what I have done, I shall oblige you to esteem me a little more than you do.

Leo. Well, let us see. But remember I am a severe critic.

Pouss. So much the better. — Imagine a rock on the left side of the picture: from this rock falls a pure bright spring, which, after sparkling a little in its fall, runs off across the country. A man, coming to

draw water at the spring, is seized by a large serpent. The serpent winds round his body, and twines several times round his arms and legs, presses him, poisons and strangles him. The man is dead; he is stretched out. The weight and stiffness of his limbs is seen. His flesh is already livid. His face of horror expresses a cruel death.

Leo. If you introduce no other object, this is but a melancholy picture.

Pouss. But you will find in it something more melancholy still. Another man advances towards the fountain; he perceives the serpent round the dead man. He stops suddenly. One of his feet remains suspended. He raises one arm, the other falls. But the two hands are spread, they mark surprise and horror.

Leo. This second object, although melancholy, fails not to animate the picture, and to give a certain pleasure, like that felt by the spectators of those ancient tragedies, where every thing inspired terror

and pity; but we shall soon see if you ——

Pouss. Ah, ha! you begin to be a little softened: but wait for the rest, if you please. You shall apply your rules when I have told you all. Close by there is a high road, on the side of which there is a woman, who sees the terrified man, but who cannot see the dead man, because she is in a hollow, and the ground makes a sort of skreen between her and the spring. The sight of the frightened man causes in her a counter-stroke of fear. These two expressions of alarm are, as one may say, what griefs ought to be; the greater are silent, the lesser complain. The terror of the man makes him motionless. That of the woman, which is less, is more marked by the distortion of her face. In her you see a woman's fear, who can contain nothing; who expresses all her alarm, and gives way to all she feels: she falls, and lets fall, and forgets what she was carrying. She extends her arms, and

seems to cry out. Do not these various degrees of fear and surprise make a kind of play that touches and gives pleasure?

Leo. I acknowledge it. But what is the design?—is it history? I don't know it. It is rather a caprice.

Pouss. It is a caprice. This kind of composition succeeds very well, provided the fancy be regulated, and that it does not depart from the truth of nature. On the left side there are some large trees, which appear old, and such as those venerable oaks which formerly served as the divinities of a country. Their ancient trunks have a rough and rugged bark, which sends to a distance a young and tender grove, placed behind. This grove has a delicious freshness. One longs to be within it. One imagines a burning sunshine would respect the sacred wood. It is planted along a clear stream, and seems to admire itself therein. On one side is a deep green, on the other the dark blue of a serene sky. In this stream several

objects present themselves, which amuse the eye, and relieve it after the terrible objects it first beheld. In the fore-ground all the figures are tragic. But behind all is peaceful, soft, and gay: here are boys bathing, and sporting as they swim. There, fishers in a boat; one is leaning forward, almost falling: they are hauling a net. Two others, leaning back, are rowing vigorously. Others are on the bank, playing at morra. By their faces you see that one is thinking of a number to take in his companion, who seems attentive not to be so taken. Others are walking beyond the water on a fresh green-sward. Seeing them in so pleasant a spot, one is ready to envy their pleasure. At a good distance a woman on an ass is seen, going to the neighbouring town; she is followed by two men. One instantly imagines these good people, in their rustic simplicity, going to carry to the town the abundance of the fields they have cultivated. On the same left side, above the grove,

there is a sharp mountain, on which there is a castle.

Leo. The left side of your picture makes me curious to see the right side.

Pouss. There is a little hill, sloping down insensibly to the river. On the slope shrubs and bushes are seen in confusion, on uncultivated ground. Before the hill great trees are planted, through which one sees the country, the water, and the sky.

Leo. But that sky,—how have you managed it?

Pouss. It is a fine blue, mixed with bright clouds, that look like gold and silver.

Leo. You did this, doubtless, to have occasion to dispose of your lights as you pleased, and to spread it over each object according to your wishes.

Pouss. I own I did. But you must also own, that in doing so, I showed that I was not ignorant of your boasted rules.

Leo. What is there in the middle of the picture, beyond the river?

Pouss. A town, which I have already mentioned. It is in a hollow, which conceals part of it. There are old towers, battlements, large buildings, and a confusion of houses in strong shadow; which relieves certain parts, lighted by a soft bright light from above. Above the town appears what one almost always sees above great cities in fine weather — the rising smoke sending off the mountains, which form the back-ground: these mountains, of irregular shapes, vary the horizon, so that the eye is satisfied.

Leo. This picture, from what you tell me, appears less learned than that of Phocion.

Pouss. There is less of the knowledge of architecture, it is true. Besides, it displays no acquaintance with the antique. But, on the other hand, the science of expressing the passions is considerable. Besides, the whole of this landscape has a grace and freshness which the other does not possess.

Leo. You then, upon the whole, would prefer this picture?

Pouss. Without hesitation. But what do you think by my description?

Leo. I don't know the picture of Phocion well enough to compare them. I see you have studied the good models of the last century and my books well. But you praise your works too much.

Pouss. Yourself obliged me to speak of them. But know, that it was neither in your books, nor in the pictures of the last age, that I sought instruction; but in the antique bas-reliefs that you studied as well as I. If I ever should return to the living, I should be able to paint Jealousy well, for you furnish me with excellent models here. As to myself, I do not pretend to take any of your science or glory from you; but I should yield to you with more pleasure if you were less fond of your rank. Let us go to Parrhasius. You shall make your remarks to him: he shall decide, if you please; for I will only yield to you

modern gentlemen, on condition that you yield to the ancients. After Parrhasius has pronounced, I shall be ready to return to earth, and correct my picture.*

* The examples chosen in these dialogues are not the happiest to prove that he sought his principles of painting in the antique bas-reliefs. The two pictures here described rather than criticised, are landscapes in which Poussin owed his success to his constant study of nature.

END OF THE DIALOGUES.

CATALOGUE

OF

POUSSIN'S PRINCIPAL PAINTINGS.

OLD TESTAMENT.

1. Sacrifice of Noah. Engraved by Frey. * — Nothing can be better than the composition of the lower part of this picture; but the appearance of the Almighty through clouds of vapour, balanced, as it were, by the flights of birds from the ark, is hardly to be justified, even by the Romish tolerance on such subjects.

2. Rebecca and Eliezar. Painted for M. Pointel, in 1648; now in the Louvre. —

* Generally speaking, Poussin's pictures have been engraved. They are favourable to engraving, as they depend more on composition than colour. The graver of Morghen has lately been employed on this painter's works.

Often and well engraved, particularly by Picart and Chereau. See p. 116.

3. Jacob asks Rachel in Marriage. Engraved. — There are only four figures in this subject, and but little back-ground.

4. Same subject. Jacob points to Leah, as if complaining of the deception practised on him after his seven years' service. Often engraved. — There are only four figures in this picture, any more than in the preceding one; but here the back ground is enriched with trees, and a distant small town. It may be doubted whether the architecture of Laban's house is not too refined for the patriarchal age.

5. Moses exposed. — This beautiful picture was painted for Stella, and is now in the Louvre. Jochebed is placing the cradle of bulrushes carefully on the river's brink, near where there is a recumbent statue of Nile, leaning on a sphinx. Her husband has turned away, and little Aaron follows him. Miriam stands by her mother, and makes signs that some one is approaching. Nothing can

be more expressive than all these figures; behind them are some fine trees, at the foot of one of which there is an altar covered with offerings, and on the branches are hung a bow and quiver, and some musical instruments: through the trees a majestic city, partly composed of local views of Rome, is seen, and the colour of the whole is beautiful. Fuseli thinks Poussin has here endeavoured to tell a story that cannot be told: but gives unqualified praise to the landscape. His words are, "Not one circumstance is omitted that could contribute to explain the meaning of the whole; but the repulsive subject completely baffled the painter's endeavour to show the *real* motive of the action. We cannot penetrate the *cause* that forces these people to expose the child on the river, and hence our sympathy and participation languish; we turn from a subject that gives us danger without fear, to admire the expression of the parts, the classic elegance, the harmony of colours, the mastery of execution." With great diffidence, I venture to suggest, that the exposing of Moses is a story so universally known, that much less than Poussin has done, would explain the occupations and feelings of all the persons engaged in the

action. Engraved by Claudia Stella, B. Audron, Chasteau, and lately, finely by Morghen.

6. The Finding of Moses. Louvre. Often engraved. — It was painted for M. Pointel, in 1647. See p. 114. The daughter of Pharaoh, with three female attendants, is receiving the child, which a man standing in the water presents to them. The figure of Nile forms part of the group, which has an unpleasant effect. The back-ground of this picture has a bridge running nearly across it.

7. Same subject. — Pharaoh's daughter, with nine attendants, and the infant Moses, form three groups in the fore-ground of this fine composition. The princess and five of her maidens, are engaged in admiring the child, who is presented by two others, connected with the principal groupe by the child and the basket. They are on the bank of the river ; one of them is assisting the other out of the water, from which action, by the disposition of the figures, it is plain that she has rescued the child. The landscape is rich and varied. On one side is the Nile, on whose banks there is a rock where the statue of Nile and a sphinx

are placed: the trees are mingled with palms and dates, the architecture is rich, and in the precincts of a temple a man is kneeling before a statue of Anubis.

8. Same subject. — Here the landscape is the chief part of the picture, though the Princess and her five women make a beautiful groupe under some lofty trees. Miriam kneels by, and seems to be offering to fetch a nurse for the babe. There is little architecture, and that little very simple.

9. Same subject, in the Louvre. — The Princess here has only seven attendants, besides a man in a boat, who appears to have been employed in saving the child; the Nile and sphinx occupy a corner of the fore-ground, and are too much mingled in the scene. The landscape is fine, and in the back-ground there are persons in a boat, engaged in hunting the hippopotamus, an incident taken from the Prænestine pavement. Egyptian deities, mixed with palm-trees, and obelisks, and pyramids, redeem the slight incongruity of mountains, and Greek and Roman temples in Egypt.

10. Moses trampling on the Crown of Pharaoh. Once in the Orleans Collection, now in England. — Pharaoh seated on a couch, has his crown lying by him, on which Moses, apparently two years old, treads: the priests considering this as an evil omen, one of them is about to stab the child, who is saved by a female attendant, the Princess and her women taking part. Here are ten figures arranged as in a bas-relief; the back-ground very simple; it is a wall, over which appears a single palm-tree, and the upper part of a temple, adorned with an Ionic order.

11. Same subject. Louvre. Painted originally for Cardinal Massimi. — This is treated in the same manner as the last, but the scene is in a chamber of the palace: the architecture being varied, and partly concealed by drapery.

12. Moses defending the Daughters of Jethro. — There is great beauty and expression in this composition. The daughters of Jethro in particular, are well grouped, and form a good contrast to the angry scene on the other side of the well, where Moses chastises the

shepherds. There is a drawing, apparently a study for this picture, which has been engraved; it has a fine severe character, and the simplicity of the back-ground, which consists entirely of hills, is perhaps more in character with the land of Midian, than the city in the picture.

13. Same subject.

14. Moses and the Burning Bush. — The Almighty is supported amid the flame by two angels. Moses is in a fine attitude of adoration, not unlike Raffaelle's Abraham at the tent door. But the subject is a stubborn one.

15. Aaron's Rod becomes a Serpent. Louvre. — This is a favourable subject for Poussin; as to composition he has disposed his figures in a series like a bas-relief, in a hall only varied by some drapery. Pharaoh is seated with his footstool before him; two aged attendants stand behind; a young man crowned with a garland bears aloft the sacred Ibis; another holds a vase. One of the magicians stoops to seize his rod, already changed into a serpent; but Aaron's rod has already begun to devour

it. These are at the upper end of the hall. Close to them Moses, Aaron, and three other persons form a group of great interest, from the part they are taking in the action. Perhaps there is too much in this picture that reminds the spectator of the Eastern jugglers; but it would be difficult to manage the subject otherwise.

16. The Children of Israel passing through the Red Sea. Painted for the Marquis del Pozzo. See p. 62.

17. The Gathering of the Manna in the Desert. Louvre. — One of Poussin's most celebrated pictures. The Cartoon, which he made for the tapestry looms at Paris, of this subject, has perished. See p. 71. and 84.

18. Moses Striking the Rock.

19. Same subject.

20. Same subject. Once in the gallery of the Duke of Orleans, now in the Stafford Collection. See p. 120. for Poussin's letter concerning it. There is in Lord Grosvenor's collection a finished study of one of the groups

in that fine picture. It has been frequently engraved.

21. Same Subject in M. Dufourney's Collection. See p. 122. for observations on these four pictures of the same subject.

22. The Setting up of the Golden Calf. — In this and the following number, Poussin appears to great advantage. The mirthful worship of the golden calf, gave scope to all his knowledge of antique ceremony and costume. And he has used freely the bas-reliefs of the ancients to adorn his pictures; two of these have been especially useful to him. One that was formerly in the Borghese collection, and another equally celebrated of the Villa Negroni, and now in the possession of His Majesty the King of England. See p. 63.

23. Same subject. Formerly in the collection of Mr. Flink of Rotterdam.

24. The Triumph of David, in the best manner of Poussin. — The colour is very red, and the manner is dry, but if it has the peculiar defects of Poussin, it has also his peculiar excellencies, learning, propriety, dignity, fine

drawing, and expression. The head of Goliah is borne along upon a spear in triumph. A figure almost dances along before, with an antique Jewish trumpet. The troops of virgins come out upon a raised terrace, with songs and dances, by which means they are well seen, though sufficiently distant not to interrupt the principal actors. It is now in Dulwich College.

25. Another of the same subject. David here is sitting while a Victory is crowning him. Some Cupids are playing with his harp; and the giant's head and armour are built up into a kind of trophy. The treatment of this picture is that of a classical *heathen* subject, and very beautiful.

26. The Ark of God among the Philistines. Formerly in the Colonna Gallery, now in the Louvre. — For terrible interest it has few rivals, and none for composition; but the painter has given us physical rather than moral expression, and thus made it loathsome rather than horrible. See p. 29.

27. The Judgment of Solomon. Louvre. — It is considered as one of Poussin's finest

works for expression, and perhaps no painter has treated the subject better; yet there is too little beauty in the women, and their violent expression excites more horror than sympathy.

28. Esther before Ahasuerus. In the *Cabinet Cerisier*. — It has been frequently engraved.

29. Terrestrial Paradise. Painted for the Duc de Richelieu. Louvre. — This is the landscape representing Spring, in the series of the four seasons.

30. Boaz and Ruth. Painted for the Duc de Richelieu, now in the Louvre. — The painter could not have chosen a better subject for Autumn than this pathetic and well-known story from the Old Testament.

31. The Bunch of Grapes from the Promised Land. — This is one of the four landscapes painted for the Duc de Richelieu, as allegorical of the Seasons. This represents *Autumn*, and was painted in 1664. It is now in the Louvre.

32. The Deluge. Painted for the Duc de Richelieu, in the Louvre; a repetition in the gallery of Cardinal Fesche. See p. 124.—Opie says of the colouring of this picture: "In this work there appears neither black nor white, neither blue, nor red, nor yellow: the whole mass is, with little variation, of a sombre gray, the true resemblance of a dark and humid atmosphere, by which every object is rendered indistinct and almost colourless. This is both a faithful and a poetical conception of the subject. Nature seems faint, half dissolved, and verging on annihilation, and the pathetic solemnity, grandeur, and simplicity of the effect, which can never be exceeded, is entirely derived from the painter's having judiciously departed from, and gone in direct opposition to, general practice."

33. The Angels appearing to Abraham.—A picture of great beauty and grace, but unhappily reminding the spectator of Raffaelle's beautiful picture of the same subject in the *Loggie*. The only criticism one feels disposed to make on the picture of Raffaelle is, that the wooden house looks too stationary for the wandering Patriarch's tent. Poussin has

gone farther, for he has built stone and lime houses, and trained vines upon wood work near them; but this, if it be a fault, is too slight to dwell upon. This picture is in the collection at Dulwich College.

34. The Ark of the Lord borne round the Walls of Jericho.— Well known, by the fine engravings, as one of the compositions characteristic of Poussin's great skill in these subjects.

NEW TESTAMENT.

1. The Annunciation. — It may be doubted whether the allegorical treatment of the subject which Poussin has adopted here be proper. The Almighty is borne by cherubim behind the angel, and the Holy Spirit is descending as a dove in a beam of light upon the Virgin. To me it appears an unwarrantable liberty, besides that it is disagreeable as a composition.

2. The same subject. — Of no great interest in itself; but the idea of the Virgin having fallen into a kind of swooning ecstacy is

uncommon and proper to the astonishing circumstances in which the message of the angel placed her. This picture was brought to England by Mr. Udney, and it is believed, was part of the collection sold by him to the empress Catherine of Russia.

3. The Marriage of the Virgin. — Not equal to either of the Marriages in the Seven Sacraments, though they have been called failures.

4. A Head of Jesus, when a Child. — He holds a globe with one hand, and the other is held up in the act of giving the papal benediction, an action that is repeated more than once in the Holy Families.

5. The Adoration of the Shepherds.

6. The Nativity. — These six pictures of the Nativity, and perhaps more which Poussin painted, have all something good in them; but they are not easy to distinguish by description.

7. Same subject.

8. Same subject.

9. Same subject.

10. Same subject.

11. Same subject.

12. Adoration of the Magi. — In the Dulwich College gallery, painted for M. Mauroy, minister of finance. This is treated nobly and historically; according to the usual traditions, one of the Magi is represented as a black man. Gaspar presented incense, in sign of worship; Baldassar, myrrh, in sign of the bitterness of the Passion; and Marchione, gold, as tribute.

13. Same subject.

14. Same subject. — In all these three, Poussin has taken advantage of the rich oriental costume, and of the traditions of the Church respecting the several gifts of the three kings or magi, to vary and enrich the composition.

15. Virgin and Child, and St. Joseph. — A round picture.

16. Virgin and Child.

17. Virgin and Child, with St. John.

18 to 37. Of upwards of eighteen Holy Families acknowledged to have been painted by Poussin, it would scarcely be possible to particularise one half. — He has indulged himself by frequently introducing groups of angels ministering to them. That pleasing picture of Lord Grosvenor's, which has been engraved by Bartolozzi, is one of these. The holy Mother, with the infant on her lap, is seated under some drapery, suspended to the trunks of trees, angels are hovering about, and presenting the child with flowers, while St. Joseph is reclining on the ground before them. Another of the same kind is at the Palazzo Torre at Naples. Some are treated simply, and are indebted for their charm to the maternal affection and the purity of the subjects. Others are placed in the midst of Poussin's own unrivalled landscape, such as that in the gallery of the Louvre : in short, the resources of genius are infinite, but language would give but a wearisome detail of its varieties.

38. Flight into Egypt. — The Virgin Mother carries her Son along, while an angel points out the road to St. Joseph, who is leading an ass.

39. Same subject. But the Virgin is here seated on the ass, and in the act of taking the child from St. Joseph, while angels lead and surround her.

40. Holy Family and Angels.

41. Repose in Egypt. — In this picture an elephant is introduced in the back-ground, with great propriety, as it decides the scene to be in Egypt. *

42. Murder of the Innocents. — The subject of this picture seems almost too horrible to be treated. Raffaelle and Guido have made it pathetic. Some other painters merely an atrocious scene of butchery. Poussin has made it terrible. One mother on her knees screaming franticly, and endeavouring to save her child from the tread of the ruffian soldier, is enough for the fore-ground ; and one beautiful figure behind, bearing the lifeless body of her infant, weeping, and with her hand pressed

* It is curious that the common people in Rome have a hymn, or rather ballad, in dialogue, between a gypsey (*Zingarella*), in her character of fortune-teller, and the Virgin.

on her head, completes the picture of maternal despair. Perhaps the horror the picture inspires is part of its praise. Nothing can be better for form and composition; yet, perhaps, a little more youth or beauty in the first mother, would have excited more sympathy. The back-ground is architecture extremely simple, nothing disturbs the interest in the actors. Great as the merits of this picture are, it may be permitted to doubt whether the painter has not gone too far in placing the ruffian's foot upon the infant. The mother's despair would have been as great, the sympathy of the spectator perhaps greater, had the infant been otherwise in peril. But there is something sickening in seeing it writhe under the weight of the assassin. This fine picture, formerly in the Giustiniani Gallery, is now in the collection of Prince Lucien Buonaparte.

43. The Baptism of Christ. — This picture furnishes an instance of Poussin's attention to expression. The people round the Baptist are all looking up to Heaven, as if attracted by the voice proclaiming, "This is my beloved Son." Caravaggio has carried the expression of sound still farther, in the picture of the

Decollation of St. John the Baptist, in the chapel dedicated to that saint, in the great church at Malta, formerly the church of the Order. There, the murder of the Saint is on one side the picture; the head is severed; an old woman going out of the prison puts her hands to her ears to shut out the shriek of death. Another female is by to receive the head, beside the executioner. The balance is kept by two prisoners at a grated window, evidently attracted there by the noise. This fine picture was suffering dreadfully in 1818 from damp.

44. Same subject; which Poussin has repeated at least four times.—That mentioned in the last number, and the Baptism in the Stafford Gallery are the most celebrated; in both the eyes of the spectators are directed towards the heavens as hearing the voice.

45. Baptism of John in the Wilderness. Painted for Le Notre, and now in the Louvre. — This is a justly celebrated picture. There are all sexes and ages assembled, and each is useful to the action, and graceful, and interesting in itself. The persons in the boat crossing

the river, are well contrived, to show the multitudes that flocked to John's baptism. The landscape is both wild and agreeable.

46. The Ministry of Christ. — Poussin's love of action and expression sometimes carries him farther than our feelings, perhaps our prejudices, will accompany him. We are startled by any symptoms of bodily activity; in the Saviour it is the Divine Spirit working inwardly. But can painting express that?

47. The Samaritan Woman at the Well. The last picture painted by Poussin for M. de Chantelou. See p. 126.

48. The Blind Men of Jericho. In the Louvre. Painted for M. Reynon, a merchant in Lyons. — Fine as Poussin's back-grounds usually are, this is one of the finest, and has the merit of looking true. The story is well and nobly told.

49. The Woman taken in Adultery. Painted for Le Notre. Now in the Louvre. — This picture has been highly and deservedly praised; even its colour is good and agreeable.

50. The Entry of Christ into Jerusalem. — There is another picture of the same subject which has been attributed to Poussin, but is the work of Stella, with thirteen others, to illustrate the passion of our Saviour. The whole of these have been given to Poussin, but ignorantly.

51. The Last Supper. An altar-piece, painted for the Chapel of St. Germain-en-Laye. — The figures are life size at least. See p. 85. and p. 88.

52. The Crucifixion.

53. Same subject. In M. Dufourney's collection.

54. The Descent from the Cross.

55. The Intombment.

56. Same subject.

57. Same subject. — Christ has the crown of thorns; two little angels are weeping at his feet.

58. Dead Christ.

59. Christ appears to Mary Magdalen.

60. Incredulity of St. Thomas.

61. Christ giving the Keys to Peter. Painted for the Commander del Pozzo. — Unusually ill-coloured; such, at least, is Richardson's account of it.

62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68. The Seven Sacraments, originally painted for M. de Chantelou. afterwards transferred to the Orleans Gallery, from whence they came into the Stafford Collection. See p. 70. and p 113.

69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75. The small set painted before the others, for the Cavaliere del Pozzo. — From the Boccapaduli collection they came to England, and are now in the possession of the Duke of Rutland. See p. 62. and p. 71.

76. Death of the Virgin. — Painted before Poussin went to Rome. See p. 25.

77. Assumption of the Virgin. — A small picture in the Louvre.

78. Another in the Dulwich College gallery; cold in colour; too much blue in the sky.

79. Extasy of St. Paul. — Painted to accompany Raffaelle's Vision of Ezekiel for M. de Chantelou. See p. 111.

80. Same subject. Louvre.

81. Paul and Silas beaten with Rods.

82. Elymas, the Sorcerer. — Nothing can be better than the blindness of Elymas himself; but the apostle has too much action, or rather gesticulation, for the grave and dignified nature of his office.

83. Peter heals the Lame. — The scene is on the steps leading up to the Temple, and the groups are very skilfully disposed, so as to lead the eye to the principal action: the architecture is grand and simple.

84. Death of Sapphira. — A picture of great merit for composition and expression: it was formerly at Versailles, and was highly

esteemed. It has been engraved by the best French engravers.

85. Martyrdom of St. Erasmus. Belonging to the picture gallery of Monte Cavallo, and executed in mosaic in St. Peter's. It was carried to Paris, and is now, with other restored pictures, in the Vatican.—The subject is so very disgusting, that one can scarcely bear to look upon it. The figures are larger than life, but it is painted in a little manner. The saint and one of the executioners have been praised; the high-priest is not worthy of the master. See p. 60.

86. Saint Margaret treading on the Dragon, and receiving the Crown of Martyrdom.

87. Vision of St. Frances.

88. The Angel dictating to St. Matthew.—The back-ground is nearly a literal view of the Tiber, taken from the Acqua Acetosa, three miles from Rome: it is very fine as a landscape, and is now in the choice, though small collection, in the Palazzo Sciarra Colonna, at Rome.

89. Miracle performed by St. Francis Xavier, who restored the Daughter of a Japanese Nobleman to Life. — This was painted by Poussin during his last residence in Paris, and is the picture so much criticised by Vouet, &c. See p. 86. The figures are larger than the life, as the work was painted for the high altar of the Jesuits' church at Paris.

90. Martyrdom of St. Cecilia. — This belongs to one of the most interesting stories in the legend, and Poussin has done it justice. The angel bringing the crown and palm to the expiring saint, is finely introduced. The statue that lies on her tomb in the church beyond the Tiber, erected over the spot where she was murdered, probably suggested to the painter the attitude of the dying martyr.

91. God the Father upborne by cherubim. — A subject that ought never to be attempted.

92. St. James the Elder having led forth his Disciples to the Banks of the Ebro, to pray, the Virgin appears to them on a jasper co-

lumn, where she ordered them to erect a church. The figures are full size in this picture, which is in the Louvre.

93. Martyrdom of Saint Lawrence. In the Zambecari Palace at Bologna. — A picture where Poussin's good taste has caused him to deviate from the common practice of stretching the martyr on the gridiron. In a public square surrounded by noble buildings, stands a statue of Jupiter, grasping a thunder-bolt. At the foot of this statue is the groupe of executioners assembled and preparing to unrobe the Saint, whose countenance and expression are beautiful. A small part of the instrument of torture is introduced to tell the story. Nothing can be a greater contrast to the horrible picture of the Martyrdom of St. Erasmus. But in the St. Lawrence, the painter has painted from his own conception of the story; in the other he was ordered to show the *new torture* invented for the saint.

94. Ecce Homo! — A subject which many painters have attempted, and in which most have failed.

PROFANE HISTORY AND POETRY.

1. Achilles discovered by Ulysses. — While Ulysses appears only intent on selling the contents of his box of pedlars' ware, and is offering a diadem to Deidamia, Achilles has seized a sword, and is eagerly drawing it from the scabbard.

2. Achilles at Scyros. — In this, while the young girls are trying on necklaces, and other female ornaments, Achilles has dressed himself in a handsome helmet; and grasping a sword with one hand, holds a mirror in the other, in which he seems to be admiring himself with no little complacency. Ulysses and his companion are rejoicing at his choice, while the old nurse looks quietly on. — The palace of Scyros, with hills, woods, and water, form a pleasing back-ground. The expression appears to me not so true as in the last, where the eagerness of Achilles in drawing the sword is surely more historical.

3. Theseus discovers his birth, by lifting the stone pointed out to him by his mother,

Æthra, and finding the sword and sandals of Ægeus. This picture is in the gallery at Florence. See p. 33.

4. The death of Eudamidas. — Exceedingly fine for expression, yet it neither does, nor can tell the very story; it is one not to be told without words; but as a death-bed scene it is most excellent. The daughter sitting on the ground and leaning on the mother's lap, is a pathetic incident, which Poussin himself has repeated, and which has been adopted by painters and sculptors after him. See Fuseli's Observations in his Fourth Lecture.

5. Young Pyrrhus saved. — This picture is in the Louvre, and is one of the most celebrated of Poussin's works. The story is admirably told. The costume, the action, the scene, are all antique, all animated, all fitted to the subject. Æacidas, King of Molossis, having been driven from his kingdom by rebels, his two friends Angelus and Androclides, fled with his son Pyrrhus, then at the breast, taking with them the nurses of the young prince. The enemy pursued them so closely, that the same night they came up

with them, on the banks of a river, swollen by recent floods; finding it impossible to ford the stream, one of them wrote a few lines on the bark of a tree, and tying them to his spear, threw it to the opposite bank, to ask assistance from the Megarians. They tied trees together to make a raft, and saved the prince. The moment Poussin has chosen, is that in which the Megarians are prepared to receive Pyrrhus and his friends, the enemy is at hand; the terror of the women is lively; the friendly strangers beyond the river are making signs to them to cross it. One of them uses the common modern manner of beckoning, in use among the Romans at this day; and as it is probable that they have retained more antique customs than other nations, he has shown his judgment in adopting that action.

6. A Sacrifice near a Mausoleum. — On the sea-shore in a grove of trees, a magnificent mausoleum, which fills more than half the picture, is erected. A priest stands by a smoking altar, and by the appearance of a boy bringing a lyre; by that of a man tying on a wreath, and by the presence of warriors

and horses, it would appear that the action to be engaged in, is the celebration of funeral games.

7. Romulus and Remus. — The scene is properly on the Tiber, and, we may imagine, among the ruins of the old Saturnia, which occupied one of the seven hills before the building of Rome. The shepherds and shepherdesses seem all awakened from their attention to their rural labours, to listen to the story of the children, one of whom is already in the arms of Lupa, while the other is still retained by her husband, Faustulus. A young man by her points towards the place where they were found.

8. Rape of the Sabines. In the Louvre. — This well known subject gives room for the introduction of all ages and characters, and Poussin has not been slow to avail himself of it. It gives greater variety and effect; he has even introduced horsemen among his groups. Near the centre of the picture, a young woman is forcibly taken by a Roman from the horse of her brother or lover, who attempts

to retain her; she is supposed to be the Hersilia whom Romulus himself married. The moment of action is at the very instant of seizing the Sabines, for Romulus still holds up the skirt of his robe, which was the signal agreed on for the Romans to break off the games, and seize the women. There is one interesting groupe, in which a girl has hidden her face on her mother's bosom, while a young Roman seems rather entreating than forcing her to accompany him. The background is filled with grand yet simple architecture.

9. Same subject. — In this repetition of the Rape of the Sabines, there appears to be too many weapons; the Sabines were certainly unarmed, and it does not appear that any bloodshed attended the actual carrying off the young women. The figure of the king is quieter and more dignified, and he is less like one of the actors.

10. Coriolanus. — "When Poussin represented Coriolanus in the Volscian camp, he placed before him, in suppliant attitudes, his mother, wife, and children, with a train of

Roman matrons kneeling, and behind them the erect and frowning form of an armed female, accompanied by another with streaming hair recumbent on a wheel. On these two, unseen to all else, Coriolanus, perplexed in the extreme, his sword half drawn, as if to slay himself, fixes his scared eyes. Who discovers not that he is in a trance, and in the female warrior, recognizes the tutelary genius of Rome, and her attendant Fortune, to terrify him into compliance? Shall we disgrace with the frigid conceit of an allegory, the powerful invention which disclosed to the painter's eye the agitation in the Roman's breast, and the proper moment for fiction? Who is not struck by the sublimity of a vision, which, without diminishing the credibility of the fact, adds to its importance, and raises the hero, by making him submit, not to the impulse of private ties, but to the imperious destiny of his country." Fuseli's Fourth Lecture.

11. Camillus sends back the Children of the Falisci with the Schoolmaster, who had betrayed them. — This is one of the few pictures painted by Poussin, where the figures are life size. It is in the Louvre.

12. The Death of Germanicus. — Now in the Palazzo Barberini at Rome. See p. 60.

13. The Continence of Scipio. — This picture came from M. de Morville's collection to Houghton, and was afterwards at Strawberry-hill. In Horace Walpole's Sermon on Painting there is a particular description of it.

14. The Roman Charity.

15. Death of Philemon, in M. Dufourney's Collection. See p. 100.

16. Perseus, and Medusa's head. — Whereever Reynolds gives an opinion, his words are too precious not to be quoted. Of this picture, belonging to Lord Gwydir, he says, "This is undoubtedly a subject of great bustle and turmoil, and that the first effect of the picture may correspond to the subject, every principle of composition is violated; there is no principal figure, no principal light, no groups; every thing is dispersed, and in such a state of confusion, that the eye nowhere finds any repose. In consequence of the forbidding appearance, I remember turn-

ing from it with disgust, and should not have looked a second time, if I had not been called back to a second inspection. I then indeed found, what we may always expect to find in the works of Poussin, correct drawing, forcible expression, and just character: in short, all the excellencies which so much distinguish the works of that learned painter."

17. Parnassus. — Apollo, and the Muses assembled, are receiving the Poets of Earth, to one of whom Apollo seems to be presenting the cup of Immortality. In the middle of the company, the nymph Castalia reclines, and two genii are distributing the water from her urn.

18. The Inspiration of a Poet. — A very agreeable picture in the Dulwich Gallery. Apollo is holding the cup of inspiration to the poet's lips. The poet is kneeling, and his face expresses extasy.

19. Jupiter fed by the Nymphs.

20. Jupiter and Calisto. — Jupiter is here under the form of Diana, seated by Calisto,

and all the elegant attributes of the goddess of hunting are introduced, her greyhounds, javelin, bow, and quiver. The Loves are playing around; and that the story may be understood, Juno is seen in the distance, dragging the unhappy nymph by the hair. The landscape is very sweet.

21. Jupiter and Antiope. — In the Dulwich Collection.

22. Leda. — She is seated on a sort of throne near a bath under some trees. The Loves have decked a swan with a chaplet of flowers, and are leading the proud bird to the edge of the bath, while their companions are hovering above, and aiming their darts at the Princess.

23. Apollo and Daphne.

24. Metamorphosis of Daphne. — Apollo is seated on a bank by the side of the Peneus, and is in the act of stretching his arms to embrace Daphne, whose change into a laurel is already begun. That nothing may be wanting to the story, the lyre of Apollo is lying

by him, and not only that, the quiver containing the darts, which he boasted were superior to those of Cupid. The angry little god is aiming a shaft at him in revenge; and Peneus, the father of Daphne, is leaning on his urn, and has one hand over his eyes, as if to screen them from the view of the fate of Daphne.

25. Venus, Love, Bacchus, and Mercury, dancing to the sound of Apollo's Lyre. — Nothing can be more poetical than the conception of this subject.

26. Venus and Adonis. — The principal figures are sleeping, while a group of Cupids try to stop a hart. The dogs, which are tied to a tree, seem eager to escape.

27. Same subject. — While the principal figures are seated on a bank under some shady trees, a Cupid is playing with the dogs.

28. Same subject. — The goddess's car seems waiting to convey her away.

29. Venus and Mercury. — In the Dulwich Gallery.

30. Mars and Venus. The Cupids disarming Mars. — Landscape with part of Rome in the distance.

31. Same subject. — While the two favourites are conversing, the Cupids have seized the arms of Mars, and the swans and sparrows of Venus, while one is riding on a stag. The little gods are the merriest little fellows that ever played round their mother, and seem bent on mischief.

32. Venus and Cupid. — Love is clothing his mother. Very delicate and agreeable.

33. Venus bringing the Armour to Æneas. Venus borne along by the Loves, points to the Armour of her son. — Tiber and his two tributary nymphs are present.

34. Same subject. — Venus preceded by the morning star, that is a Cupid with a torch, is in her chariot surrounded by clouds, and pointing to the armour suspended to a tree. The goddess and her Loves and doves, and the river god, are charming; but there is something stiff and unpleasant in Æneas.

35. Education of Bacchus. In the Louvre. — A faun holds the young god of wine, while a satyr gives him wine from a cup. There is a woman asleep in front, with a child lying also asleep on her breast.

36. Education of Bacchus. — One of Poussin's very best. In the Dulwich Collection.

37. Same subject. — Mercury brings Bacchus to the nymphs, whose beautiful forms are partly concealed by drapery, partly by the water in which some of them are lying. Their table is spread under an arbour, thickly overgrown with vines and clusters of grapes. Some of them are still sleeping. Night in her car is seen retiring, while Apollo and his horses heads appear above a hill, on which a satyr sits piping.

38. Bacchanalian subject. — Graceful and tranquil; the nymphs and Cupids at rest, one faun drinking from a horn, another with a basket of fruit.

39. Bacchanalian subject. — Very beautiful and graceful. In Mr. Angerstein's collection.

40. Another. — A dance before a temple; the boy piping is a literal copy of one of the antiques of the Villa Albani. The dancing figure behind him is also antique.

41. Bacchanalian subject. In the Louvre. — A faun is holding a bunch of grapes in one hand, and with the other pours liquor into a cup held to him by a boy. Bacchus himself seems reclining on a bed of vines, while one of his attendants drags a goat bound to him, and the other pours out a libation. A woman, seated at his feet, is playing on a guitar; two other figures are lying on the ground, and there are several children playing.

42. Triumph of Bacchus and Ariadne. — This is one of the pictures which has subjected Poussin to criticism, for inattention to the masses of light and shade, and to the grouping of the figures. He is said to have justified the similar conduct of Julio Romano in the Battle of Constantine, on the ground that such neglect corresponds better with the hurry and confusion of the subject; but this is sacrificing a great point for a less. At any

rate, it lessens the value of this picture, which for composition and drawing is excellent. It now belongs to the Earl of Ashburnham.

43. Same kind of subject. In the Barberini Palace. — It is not finished, but full of spirit, and quite in his best antique taste.

44. Nymph playing with a Faun.—In Dufourney's collection. Nothing can be more playful than the whole composition, particularly the Cupid fighting with the little satyr, and the other Cupid leading the goat on which the nymph seems intent on riding.

45. Same subject. — Cupid is pouring wine from a vase into the mouth of Faunus.

46. Venus sleeping on the Bank of a Canal. — Her reflection in the water; a satyr drawing off the drapery; two Cupids. She is lying with her back upwards. This was in the gallery of the Prince of Orange at the Hague.

47. Sleeping Nymph surprised by Satyrs, in a cheerful sylvan landscape. —The presence

of Cupid and the doves might lead us to suppose it Venus, a companion to the last.

48. Dance of Fauns and Bacchantes in honour of Pan.

49. Mars and Rhea Sylvia. At Versailles.—Rhea Sylvia is seen sleeping on a bank near a wood, with the Loves sporting round her. Tiber personified is nearly in the middle of the picture, and Mars in his chariot is breaking through the clouds on the side opposite to Rhea.

50. The Choice of Hercules. — Of this there is a fine engraving by Strange.

51. Cupids bearing the Trophies of Hercules. — This, and the eleven following numbers, were part of the old decorations of the Louvre.

52. Birth of Hercules.

53. Hercules and the two Boreads.

54. Hebe and Hercules.

55. Hercules consults the Oracle.

56. Chiron instructing Hercules.

57. Hercules instituting the Nemean Games.

58. Hercules opposes the Giants.

59. Hercules strangles Anteus.

60. Hercules relieves Atlas.

61. Hercules with the Nemean Lion.

62. Hercules overcomes Malice and Envy. See p. 99.

63. Hercules carries off a Nymph, while two Loves are bearing off the Lion's Hide between them, and a third has seized his Club.

64. Phaeton begging the Car from Apollo. — In doubt as to his celestial origin, of which his mother Clymene had boasted, Phaeton begs Apollo to grant him a sign of it. The god takes the venerable oath, "by Styx!" to do so; when the rash youth requests the guidance of his car for one day. Apollo is expostulating; Time looks uneasy, and the Rivers below seem fearful.

65. The Triumph of Flora. — One of the least agreeable pictures of Poussin. The colour has probably changed, but the light and shadow never could have been good. A tall flowering shrub, or rather tree, has a very bad effect, and there is too much confusion, at least, as the picture is now, nor does there seem much propriety in the armed figure near the car; there are nevertheless some Cupids and dancing figures that one wishes to see in better company. It is in the Capitol.

66. The Empire of Flora. Painted for Cardinal Omodei; now in the Louvre. — In this picture, all those are introduced who have been changed into flowers. Among the most conspicuous are Narcissus, who bears the same name, and Ajax, who killed himself, and Hyacinthus, killed by Apollo in playing quoits, both of whom were changed into hyacinths. Adonis is also there, and many others. Flora is dancing and scattering flowers over her subjects, before the god of gardens, who is placed on a pedestal near two trees, by a fountain. Behind, and on the opposite side, are green trained alleys, and the Sun in his car is seen driving his four horses swiftly through the heavens.

67. Triumph of Neptune. Nothing is to be wished in the composition of this triumph: all that a poetic feeling of the subject, and profound learning can give it, it has. Venus, new risen from the sea, is the object of the triumph. Around her are all the water-deities; above, the Loves fly in groupes, shedding flowers and trying their shafts; while one, holding the torch over her, claims her for the evening star. Her car is seen in the distance, driven on by a Cupid.

68. Polyphemus piping. Acis and Galatea, the sea nymphs, Tritons, and Loves, are sporting round.

69. Five Nymphs bathing.

70. Narcissus. — Echo is seen lying on the rocks behind,—beautiful, but wasted by grief; for,

> For him the Naiads and the Dryads mourn,
> Whom the sad Echo answers in her turn.

This is in the Louvre, and has been frequently engraved.

71. Same subject. In a more varied landscape, and multitudes of little Cupids.

72. Diana and Endymion.

73. The Loves and Nereides.— One of the most fanciful of Poussin's compositions. The Loves are riding on sea-monsters, and sporting in the waves, while the Nereides accompany them.

74. The Hesperides. — The three daughters of Atlas are gathering fruits and presenting them to the water-deities.

75. Arcadian Shepherds. In the collection of the Duke of Devonshire. — The thought in this picture has been greatly and justly praised, two Arcadian shepherds and a shepherdess are looking on the inscription on a tomb in the midst of an agreeable landscape. The inscription carries the moral; it is simply, *I too dwelt in Arcadia.*

76. Same subject, differently treated. In the Louvre. — Here the tomb is in the middle of the picture instead of the side, as in the other. This is preferred by the French critics, perhaps justly. The idea is the same, and the persons only different in position.

77. The Image of Human Life, or Pleasure, Labour, Riches, and Poverty, dancing to the sound of a Lyre, played on by Time; a Boy on the other side makes Bubbles with Soap through a Straw. — One picture of this subject is in the Palazzo Manfrini, at Venice; and in the Collection of Cardinal Fesche, in Rome, there is a repetition. Here the personification of the Sun is most happy; he is driven in his car through the mid-heaven, and the Hours are dancing around and behind him.

78. Time carrying off Truth from Envy and Discord. — Painted for Cardinal Richelieu, and now in the Gallery of the Louvre. See p. 99.

79. Time defending Truth. — A picture better coloured than usual. In the Manfrini Palace, at Venice.

80. Rinaldo and Armida. — Armida's chariot stays for her by the fountain, while she is bending over Rinaldo, her purposed revenge being changed into love.

81. Same subject. — Painted for Stella, now in the Dulwich collection. See p. 120. Here she is armed with a dagger, as if to kill him while sleeping, when Love holds back her hand.

82. Armida conveys away Rinaldo while sleeping. — This picture was in the Musée Napoleon, and is a beautiful and classical composition.

83. Tancred and Erminia. — There is a long and very just dissertation on this picture in Richardson, concluding thus, "Let us observe, for the honour of Poussin and of the art, what a noble and comprehensive thought! what richness! what force of imagination! what a fund of science and judgment! what a fine and accurate hand is absolutely necessary to the production of such a work!" Elsewhere he observes "that the colour is agreeable and of a taste that none but a great man would fall into." This picture was purchased in Paris by Mr. Thornhill, and brought to England somewhere about the beginning of the last century.

84. Children at Play. — This lovely picture is in Lord Grosvenor's possession.

85. Children at Play. — Very engaging, but not equal to the last. This picture is at Dulwich.

86. Cephalus and Aurora. — A composition full of classical images. Zephyr breathing soft airs, the Dawn sprinkling dew, and Flora scattering flowers; while Aurora, forgetful of her office, lingers with Cephalus, her car and her horses standing idly by, while the Loves are fluttering about rejoicing.

LANDSCAPES.

Though it would be difficult, perhaps impossible, to particularise or even enumerate all Poussin's landscapes, there are some which must be noticed, as they rank in importance with his historical pictures, if they do not surpass the most of them. Not to separate the scriptural subjects, the four landscapes of

Spring, Summer, Autumn, and Winter, are placed in the first part of the catalogue, as well as the landscape of the Finding of Moses, and that of St. Matthew and the Angel.

1. The Death of Eurydice. — There are few landscapes of which the composition is more excellent than this. The scene is in a wild meadow, on the banks of a river. On the opposite side there is a city, composed entirely of views of Rome. The castle and bridge of St. Angelo, the tower of Nero, one of those called, characteristically by the common people, the Towers of the Tyrants, for they were those of the Roman barons of the middle ages, and other of the common buildings near them, are all introduced with singular effect, and the hills behind serve to give the scene depth. Various figures in the back-ground are introduced to mark a flourishing city: some dragging along a boat, others bathing or swimming; every thing is cheerful. In the fore-ground, under the shade of some majestic trees, Orpheus is seated, playing on his lyre, with several persons listening round at a little distance. Eurydice has just started, and thrown down her basket, on being bitten by a

snake while gathering flowers. Thus the landscape is rendered interesting by a pathetic incident, and enriched by the most appropriate figures. It is in the Louvre. See p. 34.

2. The Death of Phocion. — The subject of this picture is sufficiently explained by the Dialogue between Poussin and Parrhasius, printed at the end of the Life. It belonged originally to Del Pozzo, and is now in France.

3. Another, called the Tomb of Phocion: — Nearly in the middle of the picture is a noble temple, at the foot of a rugged rock, which seems the back of a large city; for as it goes off towards the horizon on each side, buildings of all kinds, mixed with gardens, appear. On it a broad road, winding downwards from the temple, brings the eye to a plain tomb on the road-side, which seems to border a public place, for there are figures engaged in archery and other exercises. One figure is walking from that spot towards the fore-ground, which is a grove of majestic trees traversed by a road. In the grove some figures are placed in various attitudes. The principal light in the picture is on the temple, the road,

and public place, and consequently the tomb stands in the centre of that light. It is seldom that Poussin misses his effect in landscape, however justly he may be reproached for want of skill or want of attention to it in his historical pictures.

4. The Effects of Fear. — For a description of this picture, see the Dialogue between Poussin and Leonardo da Vinci. It was painted for M. del Pozzo.

5. A Desert inhabited by Cenobites. — This is a fine scene, which the painter seems to have taken from the Apennines. A deep valley, or rather a leafy gulf, surrounded by a wall of high-peaked rocks, serves as a retreat to a few hermits, whose age seems best employed in their lonely and contemplative life. Here and there the rocks open, and glimpses of the distant world are seen at a distance under the clouds that half obscure the mountains.

6. Pyramus and Thisbe. — This is a fine landscape, composed from the neighbourhood of Rome and the Tiber. A violent storm

breaks the trees, and forces every one to fly to shelter. On a point of land which advances into the river, a herd of cattle are standing with their heads together, abiding the hurricane; nearer, some bullocks with their drivers riding, as is the custom about Rome, with their spears goading on their charge, are attacked by a lion, who has fastened on one of the horses, and torn down his rider; and in the foreground, Thisbe, running for safety from the double danger of the lion and the storm, finds her lover dead.

7. Landscape of Diogenes throwing away his Pitcher, on seeing a Young Man drink out of the hollow of his Hand. — One side of this landscape is a pretty literal copy of the end of the Vatican and banks of the Tiber; the other side is an invention worthy of accompanying it, and the whole is in the best style of composition. It is in the Louvre, and is considered as one of the finest pictures of the Master.

8. Polyphemus, seated on the top of a high Rock, seems to be piping to the Sicilian Labourers in the plains below, some of whom

are digging, others ploughing, while some are seated round their rural repast in the field. On the fore-ground, the Nymphs, crowned with sedges, seem to have been bathing, and are listening to the Giant's pipe.

9. Arcas and Calisto. Calisto, in the form of a bear, is pursued by her son Arcas through the woods. Jupiter, in order to save her, appears above the clouds, into which he has already received Calisto, and whither Arcas is following her; both to become constellations. This picture is in Lord Grosvenor's possession.

10. Mercury playing the Flute to lull Argus to sleep that he may deliver Io, who has been metamorphosed into a cow.

11. The Birth of Adonis. — The landscape is said to be by Swanveldt, and the figures only by Poussin. The Nymphs are kneeling round the tree, into which Myrrha is metamorphosed, and have already received the beautiful child. The picture is in the Doria Gallery.

12. A fine landscape in the collection at Dulwich. — The subject is a road perfectly strait going off into the distance; on one side is a church, and on the other some fine trees; hills in the distance and a reservoir in the fore-ground, from which a man is taking some water. A man and a woman are sitting as in conversation on the other side of the road. The simplicity of the subject is perhaps one cause of the grandeur of this landscape, though its colour and the manner of painting are as fine as most from the hand of this great master.

13. Another of nearly the same.

14. A round landscape which appears to be a study from the Vatican. The same motive is used in the landscape of Diogenes.

15. A fine landscape. — Ruins and fine trees in the fore-ground, a town, distant mountains, and a bay behind. It is characterised by Saint John writing, and the eagle by him; so that it may be called Patmos.

16. A storm. — The branch of a large tree had fallen upon the oxen that are drawing a

loaded waggon, the driver and the cattle are beaten down, other figures are running towards the buildings for shelter.

17. A beautiful Landscape. — In the foreground two women sitting by a brook, in which one of them is bathing her feet.

18. Another where two Nymphs are gazing at a serpent who is gliding from them.

19. Another with a fountain on one side, by which there is a man sitting, and opposite there are two women seated at the foot of a monument. The trees in this landscape are superb. There is a second picture differing a very little from this.

20. Another, which may be called the Travellers, from the great number of persons going towards a city. One company seems enquiring the road which a man is pointing out.

21. Another painted for the Commander del Pozzo; there is in it a woman leaning on her hand and a child asleep by her.

22. Another in the possession of S. Rogers, Esq. — Nothing can be fresher than the whole colour of this fine landscape. The scene reminds the spectator of the neighbourhood of Grotto Ferrato; the same mountains, fine distance, venerable trees, and a beautiful stream gliding at their feet. The fore-ground is rich in foliage of various kinds, carefully and exquisitely painted. There are two figures, a man and a woman, sitting in the shade.

23. A sweet landscape with a single figure, a young woman gracefully clothed, holding her drapery, and with a basket on her head.

24. A landscape with many fragments of antique statues, bas-reliefs, &c.

There are hundreds of Poussin's landscapes, or at least of those called so. The few mentioned here are perhaps the very best.

PORTRAITS.

1. The Portrait of Himself, painted for M. Chantelou; he is sitting in his painting room, with frames and pictures about him.

2. Another nearly the same, in the Rospigliosi palace; there is sufficient difference in the disposal of the frames, &c. to mark the two pictures.

3. Another, with his Crayon in one hand.

4. A portrait of one of the Rospigliosi family.

DESIGNS FOR FRONTISPIECES.

Frontispieces designed while Poussin was in Paris.

1. For the Bible of Sixtus V. — God the Father appears above; Revelation with wings is writing in a book supported on her knee; and Faith, closely veiled, holds a sphinx.

2. For the Virgil, printed at Paris, 1642. — Apollo crowns the poet who is leaning against a laurel-tree. A Genius above holds a tablet and a pipe.

3. For the Horace printed at Paris 1642. —A Muse in whose hand is a lyre, places a mask on the poet's face, while a Genius crowns him; two laurels overshadow them.

Thirty-two designs for Leonardo da Vinci's Treatise on Painting.

There are numerous drawings and studies by Poussin scattered among the public and private collections of England, France, and Italy. Many of them have been engraved; and as his chief excellence is composition, engravers have found it profitable to publish most of his known pictures, as prints after him lose less than those after most other masters.

THE END.

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